UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

OLD ICELANDIC SOURCES IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL

RALPH BERGEN ALLEN

A THESIS

IN ENGLISH

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA

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Introduction

The present thesis is an outgrowth of work that began first with the writer's study of the old Icelandic language. Along with the not-always-pleasant labor of mastering essentials, such as paradigms, phonetics, and phonology, there developed a growing realization of the importance of Old Norse to the study of English philology.

The basic, though relatively small, contribution to English from the Old Scandinavian languages, which is represented in such common words as *both*, *call*, *cut*, *get*, *ill*, *take*, *they*, and *want*, is not in itself sufficiently inspiring to promote an interest in English-Icelandic etymologies, but translations from saga material soon bring the student face to face with words that do promote such an interest. Among the more than six hundred Old Norse roots found in English speech and literature today are many with historical and social connotations that repay the struggling student in the field with the first pleasant reward of his labor. *Bait*, *ball*, *by-law*, *booth*, *cake*, *dregs*, *drown*, *egg*, *flit*, *fog*, *gale*, *gang*, *geld*, *saga*, *scald*, *scum*, *skirt*, and *thrall* are words that reveal more to the student of Icelandic than they can possibly connote to him who knows only the surface meanings of words. From words that survive in English alone a fair picture can be drawn of the life and manners of the ancient Norsemen. Their food, their dress, their serious occupations, their amusements, their leisure hours, their glory, their hopes, their religion, their ideals, and all their physical and spiritual desires are revealed in evidence first left in English by the Northern Teutonic languages, as a result of Danish domination of Northern England during the Middle Ages. Later literary survivals like *handsel*, *pixy*, and *scrannel*, as well as less commonly known dialectal indebtedness, repay the study and research of the more than superficial student of literature and philology.

Although the study and history of both the language and the people have been of considerable interest to the writer, he was most fascinated by the sagas themselves, when the difficulties of the language had been overcome sufficiently to enable him to

enjoy the original narratives, or to appreciate some of the translations of them into English.

The people and their life survive in a very abundant literature, that is both realistic and imaginative. Great scenes stand out from the sagas: Njal's calm courage and submission to fate; his wife's refusal to take advantage of a generous offer; Illugi's defence of the dying Grettir; the terrible picture of the pestilence in the colony of western Greenland; the huge Grettir's fear of the dark; the mingled satisfaction and regret of Gudrun in the death of Kjartan; and Olaf's stand at Sticklestead, are a few that come immediately to mind.

Great and varied characterizations vie with notable figures in other literatures. Human motives, human emotions, human actions comprise the theme. Man, as he elementally is, crowds the pages. No showy rhetoric or literary invention obscures or hides the man in the telling. The generosity of Blund-Ketil; the feminine jealousy and rivalry between Bergthora and Hallgerda; the towering pride of Gerda; the love of Gisli for Auda, and her militant devotion to the death; the meanness of Hen-Thorir; the patience and the friendship of Njal and Gunnar; the chivalry of Bersi; the courage of Grettir; the undying hatred of Egil for the heirs of Harold; the craftiness of Víga-Glúm; the aged resourcefulness of Havard the Lame; the grief of Grim for his brother Helgi; the love of Frithiof and Ingibjorg; and the cunning of Snorri, the priest,—these are all unforgettable sketches of life and people that move in this virile literature.

True it is that bloodshed and violence crowd the pages of this northern record; but it is not a unique literature in this respect, unless one consider the manly resort to combat and the sword more terrible in fact, and more painful to the victims, than the glossed-over accounts of the idle warfares of a contemporary Europe, and the paternal defence of the souls of men by the specifically contrived ordeal and the rack. The violence depicted in the sagas was occasioned and actuated generally by a resort to arms for insult or wrong in a country that was the first republic, wherein no man among the freemen was ruled by his fellow. An unwritten constitution bound men to inevitable

violence in the face of certain wrongs or insults; and when this common law was actually codified in the *Grágás*, and proclaimed from the Hill of Laws at Thingvellir in the judgment of cases, we have a government of peers established the greater part of a millennium before the American Revolution. This emergence of society into a state of law and order through both justified and unjustified violence is the interesting course that the student who has sufficient grasp of the entire field to express an opinion can trace with interest.

And there is variety, though to some an unsuspected variety, in saga themes and situations. Greatness of characterization in a body of literature so large necessarily requires and promotes diversity of plot and episode, with consequent diversity of approach. Comedy is found in varying degrees. *Bandamanna* is all comedy, climaxed by a father's bantering with seven chagrined chiefs, who are humorously hood-winked when they have leagued themselves none too honorably against Odd, his son. Thorhall in *Ölkofra*, brewer extraordinary, is the hero of a clever and comical tale. A chief's festered toe in *Hrafnkel* adds a slapstick touch. Scenes of country and farm life give an idyllic charm to *Hrafnkel*. The dream ladies of *Gísli* add an appropriate and extremely effective imaginative picture. Thorgunna, the woman from the Hebrides in *Eyrbyggja*, and Glam in *Grettir* are actors in the best of ghost stories. And Romance, with the element of love, instead of the old and far-off or the new and the strange, as the central interest, can be found in its pages, particularly in *Laxdæla*, *Frithiof*, and *Gunnlaug*.

This great body of Icelandic literature, including chiefly the poetic and the prose Eddas, six major and twenty-six minor Icelandic sagas, sagas of the Faroes and the Orkneys, the saga of Jómsburg, mythical-heroic sagas, as of Hrólfr Kraki, Ragnar Lodbrók, and Frithiof, sagas of the Kings of Norway, and romantic imitations of later than classic Icelandic times, are now only partly available to English readers, and this body of translations is of relatively very recent date. Before treating Old Norse source material in the English novel it seemed advisable to the writer to trace the growth of Icelandic interest and study through the appearance in English of first and significant trans-

lations, and of works that have been signal contributions toward the advancement of Icelandic study, whereby the complete arcana of translations have been made ultimately accessible. Care has been taken to present an easily discerned chronology, as well as to discuss briefly the circumstances attendant upon, and the importance of, the publication of the works listed.

The later chapters consider adaptations in the novel of the themes and spirit of the sagas as gleaned by the authors from this available material. In a few cases, which will be noted and discussed, the narratives and background for the stories are the work of men not restricted solely to translations.

The study closes with the year 1923, the date of the death of Maurice Hewlett, who, in his six novels on Old Norse subjects, has made a contribution in the field sufficiently distinctive to merit separate and valedictory consideration.

I

Translations and Studies

The adaptation of Icelandic themes as source material for the English novel has come so generally from translations that it seems advisable to give a chronological list of renderings from Icelandic into English as an initial step in this study.[1] There are also fitted in at the proper places notations of popular and scholarly works on the prose and poetry of the Northern Teutonic lands. These studies have furnished material and background, chiefly episodic, for novelists working in this field. It is to be noted, that we find a fuller and more accurate interest, derived from this new field of romance and history, in the English prose published subsequently to the appearance of the translations.[2]

Works that have served as landmarks or as the first of their kind to advance the study of Icelandic have likewise been inserted.

The table as given shows what scant promise there was up to the fourth decade of the nineteenth century of the literature to be developed from a greater literature that was long lost to English and to world letters. It is not the purpose here to discuss Icelandic literature to exhaustion.[3] Suffice it to say, that both in quantity and quality there flourished in Iceland the greatest literature of the Middle Ages.

Hakluyt is given his position in the van because the forty-page commentary on Iceland by Arngrimr Jonsson is the most famous early recognition of Iceland, a country that centuries before recorded and preserved in its literature much of the early history of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England, Ireland, Scotland, the Orkneys, and the Faroes.

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[1] See Appendix for translations and significant works, such as, Paul Belloni Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, 2 Vols., N. Y., London, 1889-90; and Mallet-Percy-Blackwell, *Northern Antiquities* (Bohn's Antiq. Lib.), London, 1847.

[2] See Bibliography of Icelandic translations.

[3] For an exhaustive and readable account, see Gudbrand Vigfusson (aided by F. Y. Powell) in Prolegomena to his *Sturlunga Saga*, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1878.

Over a century later (1703-05) appeared the *Thesaurus* of the old Northern tongues, in volumes I and II of which appeared the work of George Hickes. Along with the Old Icelandic text, Hickes has translated a poem, known as the "Waking of Angantyr," from the *Hervarar* saga, which is the first saga in whole or in part ever to be turned into English. Hickes was the famous independent Bishop of Thetford, which fact, perhaps, accounts for a certain inquisitiveness of spirit that carried over from ecclesiastical to intellectual pursuits.

Another and more famous ecclesiastic, Bishop Thomas Percy, published in 1763 the first important translation of Icelandic verse in *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. The most famous of these translations is the prose rendering of the *Loðbrókarkviða*, *The death song of Ragnar Lodbrach or Lodbrog, king of Denmark.*[4] In 1781, this same poem was translated from the Latin of Olaus Wormius by Hugh Downman.[5] In 1782 James Johnstone,[6] in 1804-06 William Herbert,[7] and in 1875 P. C. Headley[8] translated the same poem, the popularity of which, thus recurrently evidenced, is well merited.

But the greatest service that Bishop Percy performed for the advancement of Icelandic studies in England was his *Northern Antiquities*,[9] a translation from the French of P. H. Mallet's

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[4] Reprinted in Mallet-Percy, *Northern Antiquities*, 2d Ed., London, 1809, II, 309.

[5] Reprinted in Thomas Evans, *Old Ballads*, London, 1784, III, 108–123; also in *Poems* by Hugh Downman, Exter, 1790, pp. 144–163.

[6] Reprinted, *Lodbrokar quida; or the death-song of Ragnar Lodbrog, king of Denmark* (Icelandic, English and Latin), Copenhagen, 1813.

[7] William Herbert, *Select Icelandic Poetry Translated*, London, 1806, Pt. II, 35–49: now accessible in his *Works*, London, 1842, I, 286–97; and in H. W. Longfellow, *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*, Philadelphia, 1845, pp. 51–53.

[8] P. C. Headley, *The Island of Fire, or a Thousand years of the old Northmen's home* (874–1874), Boston, 1875, pp. 12–17.

[9] Bishop Percy's full title is self-explanatory: *Northern Antiquities; or a historical account of the manners, customs, religion, and laws, maritime expeditions and discoveries, language and literature of the ancient Scandinavians*, translated from the French by Thos. Percy, bp.

P. H. Mallet's complete work was *Histoire de Dannemarc*, 6 Vols., Geneve, 1768, of which Vols. 1 and 2 were arranged, translated, and published by Bishop Percy as *Northern Antiquities*. The titles of Mallet's volumes: (Vol. 1) *Introduction . . . ou l'on traite de la religion, des loix, des moeurs, et des usages des anciens Danois;* (Vol. II) *Introduction . . . . contenant des monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des anciens peuples du Nord.*

Notable later editions are those of R. Jamieson and H. Weber, Edinburgh,

Monumens . . . des Anciens Scandinaves. This book was the first to bring into English the knowledge of the Icelanders and their literature. It has been re-edited at various times with new material added and older material altered in the light of subsequent knowledge, so that later editions are still very readable and trustworthy.

The first translations of historical material from the sagas were made by James Johnstone.[10] He was followed by G. J. Thorkelin.[11] Their subjects and interest lay chiefly in the history of Ireland, Scotland, Man, and the Orkneys. England had her Chronicles and Geoffrey of Monmouth, both better known, though not so reliable as history.

In 1797 appeared A. S. Cottle's translation in verse of *Icelandic Poetry, or the Edda of Saemund* from the manuscript now preserved in the Royal Library at Copenhagen and known as *Codex Regius* (R2365). This precious document was discovered in 1643 by Brynjolfur Sveinsson, Bishop of Skalholt, but so difficult was the task of Icelandic study at this time that over a century and a half elapsed before this compendium of Northern mythology was available to English readers. Since Cottle's time six poems have been added to the original twenty-nine of the manuscript, and numerous translations have appeared[12] both of the whole work and of individual poems.[13] Fragments and slightly altered versions of these Eddic poems produced the *Völsunga* saga, and in medieval times, fragments from ballads and folk lore served to inspire, and to furnish material for, the unknown

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1814, which first published Sir Walter Scott's abridgment of the *Eyrbyggja* saga; and of J. A. Blackwell, London, 1847, containing the editor's translation of the *Prose Edda.*

[10] James Johnstone, (a) *Anecdotes of Olave the Black, King of Man, by Snorro Sturluson, now first published in the original Icelandic with translation and notes,* Copenhagen, 1782; (b) *Norwegian Account of Haco's Expedition against Scotland, now first published in the original Icelandic with English version and notes,* Copenhagen, 1782: republished London, 1882.

[11] G. J. Thorkelin, Ed., *Fragments of English and Irish History in the 9th and 10th centuries, translated from the Icelandic,* London, 1788.

[12] A notable early one by Benjamin Thorpe, *The Edda of Saemund the Learned, with mythological index,* 2 Vols., London, 1866.

[13] An idea of the number of translators of Icelandic poems existing in 1845 can be seen in H. W. Longfellow, *The Poets and Poetry of Europe,* Philadelphia, 1845, pp. 37–51. The nine poems given here are by five poet-translators: E. Henderson; W. Taylor; William Herbert; R. Jamieson; and G. Pigott.

author of the Nibelungenlied. In this last work one can see how inferior as narrative is the romantic treatment given to this material by the medieval German poet. Characters are changed to such actors in European history as Theodoric of the East Goths. Brynhild is a poor creature compared to her prototype in the saga.[14]

In 1804-06 William Herbert published his selections of Icelandic poetry. These appear in anthologies and selections: Longfellow[15] reprints his *Þrymskviða*, *Skírnismál*, *Helreið Brynhildar*, and a portion of *Sólarljóð;* the *Journey of Skirnir*, dealing with Frey's wooing of Gerd, is quoted from at length by Anderson.[16]

In 1814, shortly after Herbert, there appeared the name of Sir Walter Scott, who should perhaps have special place here, for he evidenced an interest in Icelandic life as given in the sagas, though he did not, as is generally supposed, know much Icelandic.[17] Scott's novel, *The Pirate*, shows antiquarian interest and knowledge away from his beloved border,[18] but he is listed at this place in the study for his abstract of the *Eyrbyggja* saga, which first appeared in 1814.[19] Scott's interest in this particular saga is not far to seek. It is one of the most informative of sagas on the manners and customs of early Iceland before the

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[14] A splendid treatment of this subject is given in Sparling's introduction to his edition of Morris and Magnússon's *Volsunga Saga.*

[15] *Op. cit.*

[16] R. B. Anderson, *Norse Mythology*, Chicago, 1875.

[17] See C. H. Nordby, *The Influence of Old Norse Literature upon English Literature*, N. Y., 1901, pp. 20 ff.; Frank Edgar Farley, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement*, Boston, 1903; and Paul Lieder, "Scott and Scandinavian Literature," in *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 55 (Oct., 1920).

[18] Knowledge derived, as Lieder proves, *ibid.*, p. 9, from a Latin study with voluminous quotations of Old Norse literature and customs by Thomas Bartholine, *Thomæ Bartholini Thomæ Filii Antiquitatum Danicarum de Causis Contemptæ a Danis adhuc Gentilibus Mortis Libri Tres ex vetustis Codicibus et Monumentis hactenus ineditis congesti*, Hafniæ (Copenhagen), 1689.

[19] Sir Walter Scott, "Abstract of the Eyrbiggia Saga" in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, Ed. R. Jamieson and H. Weber, Edinburgh, 1814, pp. 475–513.

The abstract is dated, Abbotsford, October, 1813 and signed W. S. It was later published under the title, *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, an abstract of the Eyrbiggia Saga*, in the fifth volume of Scott's *Prose Works*, Edinburgh, 1834, pp. 355–413. The same abstract is included in Blackwell-Mallet-Percy, *Northern Antiquities*, London, 1847, pp. 517–540.

introduction of Christianity in the year 1000. It abounds in revelation of Icelandic life and beliefs, religion, berserks, sorcery, hauntings, feasts, feuds, and, in short, of everything that the student of folk lore would seek in a text-book on the subject.

One of the books listed in Scott's library[20] at Abbotsford is *Eyrbyggia Saga sive Eyranorum Historia*, Ed. G. K. Thorkelin, Copenhagen, 1787. As in the case of his knowledge of Icelandic folk lore,[21] Scott's abstract probably was taken from a Latin source, and the book, we see, was not far to seek. Scott's work is in no sense a translation, being just a narrative of the "more interesting parts."

Scott also suggested to R. P. Gillies the idea of issuing a magazine to introduce Scandinavian literature to Englishmen. *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, edited by R. P. Gillies, who was helped in the undertaking by Scott, was the result.[22] The first issue appeared in 1827, and it thus became the first magazine to publish Icelandic literature and information, though it was not devoted exclusively to that material, as the title indicates.

The knowledge of Icelandic prose made slow progress. Some years later, in 1834, the next publication appears, and that only as a result of historical, rather than of literary, significance. William Forbes Skene, a learned antiquarian, published in *Transactions of the Iona Club* extracts from the *Ynglinga* and *Laxdæla* sagas and from the *Landnámabók*, material illustrative of the history of the North of Scotland. These selections, being limited to his purpose, are necessarily otherwise unimportant today, except as they are the first English appearance of the *Laxdæla* saga and the *Landnámabók*. Johnstone[23] had used a part of Snorri's work before. Here and throughout Icelandic literature we find how completely the historical sagas can be depended upon. Numerous references to the same historical events in different sagas enable the historian to write with absolute certainty upon events that are not so clear in other less reliable, and often purposefully distorted, medieval records.

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[20] *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford*, Edinburgh, 1838.
[21] P. H. Lieder, *op. cit.*
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[23] James Johnstone, *op. cit.*, note 10 (a).

In 1839, many years after Percy's, Cottle's, and Herbert's translations of Icelandic poetry, appeared Pigott's *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, containing a popular account of the two Eddas. Pigott has the distinction of making the first discussion of the prose, or younger, Edda, and of writing the first exposition and the earliest popular treatment of any subject relating to the history or literature of Iceland. This ancestral book has had a numerous progeny. While priority must be yielded to Pigott, the first monumental work on northern mythology came with Benjamin Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, 3 vols., London, 1851-52.

In the age of Romanticism that was reflected in the literature of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, little appears from the distant past of the sagas for the obvious reason that, while scholars might have known, the poets knew little of the subject compared to the material that was accessible to them from the history of other countries and from Greek and Latin themes; but George Stephens' translation (1839) of the poetical version of the *Frithiofs* saga by the Swedish poet, Tegnér,[24] is the notable and solitary exception. It is a translation from the Swedish, but Tegnér had little to change in this beautiful love story of Friðiof and Ingibjorg, except for the exigencies of his verse, and Stephens' work brought into English the first of the Fornaldarsögur (distant-age sagas), or mythical-heroic sagas. The saga has long been a favorite, and can best be read today in William Morris' *The Story of Fridthjof the Bold*.[25] Stephens was, while professor at Copenhagen, a great collector of popular tales and a great authority on runes,[26] and, while not a great poet himself, was a scholar well equipped and sufficiently imbued with admiration for the subject to render the subject-matter and the Swedish adequately.

The tremendously fascinating references in the sagas either to

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[24] Longfellow called the attention of Americans to Bishop Tegnér's poem in his flattering and convincing notice of the "Fridthjof Saga" in *The North American Review*, No. XCVI. The essay, rewritten and enlarged, was included in Longfellow's *Prose Works*, Boston, 1864, Vol. I.

[25] Reprinted as one of E. Magnússon and W. Morris' *Three Northern Love Stories and other Tales*, London, 1875.

[26] Dasent in "Introduction" to Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1874, p. lxxvii.

the Icelandic settlement in Greenland or to the Norse discovery of Wineland the Good (America) is first recorded in English in 1840 by Thorleif Gudmundsson Repp in *A Memoir of Einar Sokkason*, relating to the establishment of the Garðarsee in Greenland. The *Grænlendinga þáttr*, from which the memoir is taken, is in the *Origines*[27] as the *Tale of the Greenlanders*.

In the next year appeared *The Discovery of America by the Northmen* by N. L. Beamish, chiefly exposition and discussion, which contained a version of part (Ch. 6-15) of the saga about Eric the Red.[28]

In 1842, George Webbe Dasent began his distinguished career in this field with his first Icelandic translation, that of the prose Edda, of which only a popular account had been given before.[29] Dasent's first work was published in Stockholm, whither he had gone in the diplomatic service. While there, he became a student of the Scandinavian languages, and from them, of the Old Icelandic. A friendship with Jacob Grimm strengthened his scholarly interest. Dasent's knowledge of the original, combined with a simple, unaffected style that is readable, and that at the same time preserves the strength and directness of his subject, makes his translations on the whole the best that have appeared in English.[30]

In 1843, Dasent contributed greatly to the equipment in English for Icelandic study by translating from the Danish,

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[27] Vigfusson and Powell, *Origines Islandicae*, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1905, II, 748–56.

[28] N. L. Beamish, *The Discovery of America by the Northmen*, London, 1841, pp. 81–105; reprinted in *Voyages of Northmen to America*, E. F. Slafter, Ed., published by Prince Society, Boston, 1877; also reproduced in R. B. Anderson, Ed. (Norrœna Series) *The Norse Discovery of America*, London, N. Y., et al., 1906.

[29] Grenville Pigott, *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology, containing a popular account of the two Eddas*, London, 1839.

The prose Edda has had these satisfactory and readable versions: G. W. Dasent, Stockholm, 1842: a translation of *Gylvaginning* and the narrative passages of *Skáldskaparmál;* Rasmus B. Anderson, Chicago, 1880; Anderson also edited (Norrœna Series) translations of both Eddas; J. A. Blackwell, *Prose Edda* in Blackwell-Mallet-Percy, *Northern Antiquities*, London, 1847 (Blackwell's Edda ends with *Bragarœdur*); Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, *The Prose Edda by Snorri Sturluson*, N. Y., London, 1916, which contains the first complete English version of *Skáldskaparmál:* but omits the *Háttatal*.

[30] The writer feels that this statement is unquestionably true of Dasent's prose translations of the *Njáls* and *Gísla* sagas, which follow later.

Rasmus Kristian Rask's *Grammar of the Icelandic or Old Norse Tongue.*[31] One of the great barriers to the study of Icelandic was thus removed.

Judging from the many notes of indebtedness prefaced to English novels on saga subjects to be treated later, one would be safe in saying that Samuel Laing's translation of the *Heimskringla, or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway* in 1844 was a pioneer work leading to literary inspiration and adaptation. Contrasted with the rather esoteric quality and content of Icelandic translations that preceded, this great history also has a popular appeal, and much of the subsequent interest of readers and writers in Icelandic literature can be attributed to the man who made this veritable storehouse of history and general information of primitive Teutonic times accessible to them. The sixteen sagas, beginning with the mythical *Ynglinga* saga and running through the fifteen historical sagas to that of *Magnus Erlingssonar* and the battle of Ré (1177), represent a compendium of northern Teutonic lore that could least of all be spared from the great body of Icelandic literature.[32] Despite the fact that Laing may have known little Icelandic compared to his rather severe critic, who implies that Laing rendered into English the Norwegian translation by Aall,[32] the *Heimskringla* version by Laing, besides giving an early impetus to Icelandic reading and studies, is remarkably readable, in places much more so than that of Magnússon and Morris. It is less literary, but this series of historical sagas does not require the ornate decoration and studied kenning that archaists often employ in their faithful, but forbidding, translations from the living speech of an earlier day to the dead speech of a later one.

Blackwell's edition of Mallet-Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, in addition to its prose Edda,[33] contains the summaries of three sagas: *Kormáks*, *Njáls*, and *Laxdœla*. These versions do not even approximate a translation, and the epitomes are given in a rather

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[31] Rask's *Grammar* also translated and abridged by H. Lund (vocabulary by Jón A. Hjaltalín), *Short . . . . . Method of Learning . . . . . Icelandic, after R. K. R.*, London, 1868.

[32] G. W. Dasent in Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *op. cit.*, p. xcii.

[33] See note 29.

flippant, almost burlesque, manner, but the essential points of the narratives are outlined. Mention is made of these short narratives here because they represent the first appearance, in whole or in part, of these great sagas in English. Fortunately, these sagas are available in excellent translations.

Relatively unimportant in this study, but interesting in its evidence of Norse participation in the Crusades, is Thomas Wright's *Saga of Sigurd the Crusader* (1107-1111).[34] The matter is taken from Laing's *Heimskringla*. Published in 1848, Wright's book adds rapid testimony to the significance of Laing's translation.

Dasent continued his work with the publication in 1859 of *Popular Tales from the Norse*, a translation of the fascinating collection of fairy-tales and fables from Norse folk-lore made by Asbjörnsen and Moë, who incidentally supplied herein much of the material from which Andersen later produced his stories. The first of the Norse tales by Dasent appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, November, 1851; the last collection, in 1874.[35] They form the first tales, in point of time and of group excellence, that have come into English from the Norse nature myths, dreams, and fantasies, and can be medicinally recommended to the slightly informed, who know only the bloodiness of the sagas.

In 1861 appeared *The Story of Burnt Njal*, Dasent's translation of the greatest of the Icelandic sagas. It is impossible to estimate the impetus given to Icelandic reading and study by the appearance of this work, the first translation of the six greater Icelandic sagas.[36] Heretofore, knowledge of, and interest in,

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[34] Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine*, London, 1848, pp. 50-62.

[35] In 1874 Dasent published his second volume of tales, also from the Norse collection of Asbjörnsen and Moë: G. W. Dasent, *Tales from the Fjeld*, Edinburgh, 1874. Others appeared in *Selections for Children*, Edinburgh, 1862.

The body of Norse tales translated by Dasent is considerable. They were not all collected in these three volumes (1859, 1862, 1874), nor confined to those gathered in Asbjörnsen and Moë. Jón Árnason, a great collector, who was inspired by the work of Jacob Grimm, also furnished Dasent with some of the originals, though most of Árnason's stories were translated into English by G. E. J. Powell and E. Magnússon, *Icelandic Legends*, 1st series, London, 1864; 2d series, London, 1866. Dasent's tales are found in numerous volumes published since his death under titles such as *Norse Wonder Tales for Children*, *Norse Fairy Tales*, *Selections for Children*, etc.

[36] *Njáls, Eyrbyggja, Laxdœla, Egils, Víga-Glúms and Grettis.*

Icelandic material was confined chiefly to poetry and history, but this work aroused enduring and expanding interest in the sagas; and the sagas are the glories of this Northern literature. In the tales of Gunnar, Njal, Hall O'Side, and Brian Boroimhe,[37] that are woven together to form the *Njáls* saga, we have an epic that no novelist has been sacrilegious enough to rework or tamper with.[38] In character portrayal, in incident, in pathos, in sweep from mean and petty motives to the loftiest sacrifice to uphold the dignity and righteousness of the law, and in tragic situation, Dasent has brought out all the possibilities of the original. It has a unity in the working out of justice that allows the characters to assert themselves for what they are.[39] The translation is easy and (by nature of the story also) interesting to read.[40]

An enthusiastic scholar-teacher's pilgrimage to Iceland to visit the scenes, especially those of the *Grettis* saga, in which he was particularly interested,[41] led to Baring-Gould's *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas* in 1863. In the book, as he recounts his visits to places there, he works in stories from the sagas associated with these localities. Eight short stories or episodes are briefly summarized from five sagas, viz., *Grettis*, *Egils*, *Vatnsdæla*, *Bandamanna*, and *Flóamanna*,[42] but there is no connection between them except as the scenes of action are tied together by the journey. They constitute the first treatment of these five sagas in English, although the value of them even as summaries is negligible, treating as they do only small parts of the whole.

Eiríkr Magnússon's name, one distinguished both alone and in association with William Morris, appears first as a collaborator with G. E. J. Powell (not to be confused with Frederick York

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[37] The great Irish champion, who, it will be remembered, fell at Clontarf in 1014, and comes into the *Njáls* saga because the feud was carried to Ireland before the final reconciliation of Flosi and Kari.

[38] There is only a narrative adaptation: Allen French, *Heroes of Iceland*, Boston, 1905.

[39] W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance*, London, 1897, p. 191.

[40] Many editions and abridgments testify to this, the most available and recent in the *Everyman's Library*.

[41] Sabine Baring-Gould, *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas*, London, 1863, p. 8.

[42] *Ibid.*, *Grettis*, pp. 8, 76, 32, 246; *Egils*, pp. 49–56; *Vatnsdæla*, p. 138; *Bandamanna*, p. 300; *Flóamanna*, p. 368.

Powell, so long and eminently associated with Gudbrand Vigfusson) in translating Icelandic legends and fairy tales collected by Jón Árnason.[43] In both partnerships Magnússon seems to have been the court of final appeal for the Icelandic. Powell and Magnússon's tales follow Dasent's, being likewise in two series, the first in 1864, and the second in 1866.

The second of the major Icelandic sagas to be translated is the work of Sir Edmund Head, whose *Story of Víga-Glúm* is considered a "successful rendering as to style and language of an Old Norse translation."[44] He chose in his difficult task one of the oldest of the sagas. It therefore gives interesting information on the old religion, customs, and beliefs. Glum himself, in keeping with his time, is a savage character who has fits of laughter when the urge for killing comes upon him. The saga is extremely interesting for the antiquarian and social historian, though much of the blood-curdling reputation of the sagas comes from such pictures of events as this one gives.

After a period of five years from the *Story of Burnt Njal*, during which interval he translated the sagas of *Magnus the Good*[45] and of *Harold Hardrada*,[46] numbers VIII and IX of the *Heimskringla*, Dasent published in 1866 *The Story of Gisli the Outlaw*, the first of the minor Icelandic sagas to appear in English, and the greatest of them. Of course Dasent's early entry into the field of saga translations gave him a wide choice, but he used his advantage with good judgment. The *Gísla Saga Súrssonar* is a powerful and moving story of a man, outlawed for the avenging of his blood-brother, who, sensing and believing in the fate that is to overtake him, exhibits in the face of these odds all the noble qualities of which the human race is possessor. The imaginative touch added by the dream ladies is most effective and appropriate to the fatal theme. This translation should be better known. It is a rather inaccessible book, and should be reprinted.

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[43] See note 35.

[44] Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. Y. Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1883, I, CXV, note.

[45] *North British Review*, XXXIX, 1863, pp. 493–537; reprinted in G. W. Dasent, *Jest and Earnest*, 2 Vols., London, 1875, II, 154–247.

[46] *North British Review*, XL, 1864, pp. 93–143; reprinted in G. W. Dasent, *Jest and Earnest*, 2 Vols., London, 1875, II, 248–353.

Modern readers would find it least of all beleaguered with the genealogies, by-play, and extraneous matter that often encumber the main themes of the Icelandic masterpieces.

The year 1869 heralds the appearance as collaborators of Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris in the field of Icelandic translations. Theirs are, perhaps, the most widely known to readers of English, partly because of the position of Morris in English letters, and because of his poetical treatment of Icelandic themes, such as "The Lovers of Gudrun," in *The Earthly Paradise.* Morris (he was then thirty-five years of age) first became acquainted with Magnússon on August 1, 1869, at Bloomsbury Square, London. Here began an association in labor and closest friendship[47] that extended over a period of twenty-seven years, from the first publication, that of *The Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-Tongue and Rafn the Skald*,[48] to the last, that of Volume V of the *Saga Library* (1895). Morris' first acquaintance with Icelandic was with *Gunnlaug*, and was made through Magnússon. With Magnússon he spent three hours daily in reading the sagas to amuse himself, so that before he left London for Cambridge in 1871, he had read the best of the sagas for the story, with little attention to grammar. Morris never became a slave to philology. He left the difficult, and to him uninteresting, task to Magnússon, who was the ever-present court of last appeal in the innumerable difficulties that arose in their long series of translations. Morris liked the "directness of the sagaman in dealing with relations of man to man; the dramatic way in which he arranged material for the story; the graphic descriptions of personal appearances and

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[47] See obituary notice of Morris by Magnússon in *Cambridge Review*, Nov. 20, 1896.

[48] Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris, "The Saga of Gunnlaug the Wormtongue and Rafn the Skald" in *The Fortnightly Review*, 1869 (n. s. V), pp. 27–56; reprinted in the widely-known *Three Northern Love Stories and Other Tales*, London, 1875, pp. 1–93, the latter most accessible in a new edition, London, 1901. A separate and beautiful edition of *The Story of Gunnlaug the Wormtongue and Raven the Skald* was printed for Morris in 1891 by the Chiswick Press. Magnússon and Morris' *Gunnlaug* is drawn upon by E. H. Jones in his *Gunnlaug and the Fair Helga* in G. W. Cox and E. H. Jones, *Tales of the Teutonic Lands*, London, 1872, pp. 325–345; later embodied in 2d edition of G. W. Cox and E. H Jones, *Popular Romances of the Middle Ages*, N. Y. and London, 1880, pp. 345–373.

of the fray of battle; and the defiant way he faced wrong-doing, danger, overwhelming odds, or death."[49]

Before the end of this same year, 1869, Magnússon and Morris translated their second volume, *Grettis Saga: the Story of Grettir the Strong*,[50] which thus became the third of the five major Icelandic sagas rendered into English. Like Gisli, Grettir was an outlaw, but his "character is less attractive than Gisli's and his hard fate less touching."[51] Grettir's story reads like a thrilling biographical sketch covering the almost twenty-year outlawry of a man of superhuman strength and ungovernable temper who, after defying innumerable, implacable foes, is killed only while helpless and dying from a gangrenous wound. The story, a fifteenth-century version, now contains many incidents added as embellishments, which were not in the original and historical part.[52] Many of these additions are in poor taste, especially the closing chapters treating of the revenge for Grettir in Micklegarth (Constantinople) by Thorsteinn Dromund, whose affair with Lady Spes, taken from the Tristan story, represents the vast gulf that separates the French Romance from the Icelandic Saga. The translation of this saga by Magnússon and Morris is faithful to the extent of being too literary, but while it suffers by comparison with the story itself and the simple rendering of Dasent's *Gisli*, the translator's style heightens the effect in some instances, as in the account of Grettir's fight with Glam, which is one of the great ghost stories of literature.

The corner of Magnússon and Morris on Icelandic translations

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[49] All this information dealing with relations of Magnússon and Morris is given by Eiríkr Magnússon in *Saga Library*, 6 Vols., London, VI, preface xiii ff.

[50] Retold as *Grettir the Strong* in G. W. Cox and E. H. Jones, *Tales of the Teutonic Lands*, London, 1872; and paraphrased in same authors' *Popular Romances of the Middle Ages*, London, 1880, pp. 400–457. The story of Grettir is also told in S. Baring-Gould, *Grettir the Outlaw: a Story of Iceland*, London, 1890; and in the same author's *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas* (see note 41), many extracts are given from this saga. See also, Allen French, Ch. III of the present work.

[51] W. A. Craigie, *The Icelandic Sagas*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 65.

[52] Students of English will recognize in the mythical part of the saga, describing Grettir's fight with the trolls in the caves beneath the river, an Icelandic similarity to the Beowulf story.

is interrupted by a translation of the *Faröese* (*Færeyinga*) saga, which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1869.[53] However, all the saga material relating to the Faroes is authoritatively and finally given later in F. York Powell's *Tale of Thrond of Gate, commonly called Færeyinga Saga* (1896).

The poet in William Morris led next to an interest in, and then with Magnússon a translation of, the *Völsunga* saga.[54] The phrasing and diction of Morris is happier in this mythical-heroic saga than in his historical translations. Only a translator gifted with poetic insight and imagination could do justice to this greatest of extant summaries of Icelandic legends and mythology, based possibly on a lost saga of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, and certainly on the heroic poems of the Elder, or Poetic, Edda.[55] It is a poetic subject, and a poet has translated it admirably, with the assistance of the scholar. The theme of this saga is the most famous and widely-known story in Teutonic literature, and is familiar to those who have knowledge of the *Nibelungenlied*, Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs*, and Morris' own *Sigurd the Volsung*.

In 1871 Morris tried his hand alone with *The Story of Frithiof the Bold*.[56] The story had already appeared in English in George Stephens' translation from the Swedish of Bishop Tegnér's *Frithiofs* saga.[57] Morris' work, in addition to being a translation from the original, is given notice here to show the remarkable

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[53] *Blackwood's Magazine*, CVI, Edinburgh, 1869, pp. 618–630; 701–719.

[54] Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris, *The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs with certain songs from the Elder Edda*, London, 1870. The text had been edited only five years before by Bugge. No one has since needlessly translated this saga as has happened with the Eddas and some sagas. As is true of Dasent's *Gísli*, and *Njála*, this failure represents a distinct compliment. There have been new editions: (a) with introduction and notes by H. Halliday Sparling, London, 1888 (Camelot Series, Ernest Rhys, Ed.); (b) supplemented with legends of Wagner trilogy by Jessie L. Weston, London, N. Y., et al., 1906 (Norræna Society, R. B. Anderson, Ed.). A paraphrase is given in G. W. Cox and E. H. Jones, *Tales of the Teutonic Lands*, London, 1872, pp. 31–78.

[55] A complete discussion of the composition of the *Völsunga* saga and criticism of it are given in Magnússon and Morris' preface to their translation.

[56] Published in *Dark Blue*, I, London, 1871, and reprinted in E. Magnússon and W. Morris, *Three Northern Love Stories and Other Tales*, London, 1875. Paraphrased in G. W. Cox and E. H. Jones, *Tales of Teutonic Lands*, pp. 210–246.

[57] For translations of this noble love story, see Adolph B. Benson, "A List of the English Translations of the Frithjof's Saga," *Germanic Review*, I, 1926.

facility and speed with which this versatile genius had mastered the difficulties of translation from the Icelandic, and to record more fully the rapid fascination that Icelandic literature had for the man from whom it was entirely hidden until two years previously, at which time he was already well on toward middle life.

The invaluable *Orkneyinga* saga, a composite of many sagas relating to the Orkneys, containing comparative historical references to England, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and other northern countries, was first made available to English readers by Jón A. Hjaltalín and Gilbert Goudie in 1873.[58] It is impossible to overestimate the value of such saga collections, for they contain many sagas and parts of sagas that existed separately and have since been lost, except as preserved by the writer or scribe who brought together in such collections everything that pertained to the locality or individual[59] he was interested in. Such records have great historical significance in that they often serve as a check to substantiate or repudiate events recorded in less reliable medieval authorities. The activities of the famous Turf-Einar and Earl Sigurd were not confined to the Orkneys alone, and besides, the Orkneys were prominent at the time of the emigrations from the overlordship of Harold the Fair-Haired.

The year 1874 marks the appearance of Gudbrand Vigfusson in Icelandic studies in England. He was a man of prodigious learning and undoubtedly one of the greatest Icelandic scholars mentioned in this study. A native Icelander from Broadfirth, he worked for fourteen years in the Arna-Magnaean collection at Copenhagen, whither he had gone as a student.[60] He edited *Biskopa Sögur* (1858); *Bárdar Saga* (1860); *Forn Sögur* (with Mobius, 1860); *Styrbyggja Saga* (1864); and *Flateyar-bók*

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[58] Hjaltalín, Jón and Goudie, Gilbert, *Orkneyinga Saga*, Edinburgh, 1873. This saga was later translated in 1894 by G. W. Dasent from Gudbrand Vigfusson's exhaustive and definitive edition for the Master-of-the-Rolls Series.

A late episode of the Orkneys, *Brenna Adams Biskups* (The Burning of Bishop Adam) was added to the *Orkneyinga Saga*, 1873, pp. 200–201; 1894, pp. 232–233.

[59] *Cf.* the *Olaf Tryggvason* saga, translated by J. Sephton, 1895.

[60] These biographical notes are taken from *D. N. B.*

(with Unger, completed 1868),—all of them scholarly works employing the historic method and the results of modern philology. In 1866 he was invited to Oxford by G. W. Dasent, who found the task of completing Richard Cleasby's *Dictionary* too gigantic along with other work; and eight years afterwards, in 1874, appeared the monumental Cleasby-Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*.[61] It would be more proper to call it Vigfusson's work except that the project would probably not have been initiated by him. One might almost say that this work made Icelandic study popular, that is, possible for the average student not a philologist, who, like Morris, might wish to read the originals for delight in the story and knowledge of life and people therein portrayed. This dictionary with its grammar made the equipment for Icelandic study complete for the scholar,[62] for the enviable dabbler in the language and literature of the North, and for many of those who have since published translations of the sagas. Vigfusson was himself an inspiration and an aid to others in Icelandic study. He supplied Dasent with most of his material for the introduction to *The Story of Burnt Njal;* he helped and encouraged Dr. John Carlyle, younger brother of Thomas, Lord Sherbrooke, Sir Edmund Head, Robert Lowe, Mr. Garnett, and Principal Barclay, all English scholars[63] interested in Icelandic, though only one has left a translation in evidence,[64] and that dated the year of Vigfusson's arrival at Oxford.

The Three Northern Love Stories and Other Tales, of which the stories of Gunnlaug and of Frithiof had appeared before,[65] broke the four-year silence of Magnússon and Morris. To the two previously published stories were added *The Story of Viglund the Fair*, *The Tale of Hogni and Hedinn*, *The Tale of Roi the Fool*, and the *Tale of Thorstein Staff-Smitten*. The scope evidenced

[61] See "Introduction and Life of Richard Cleasby" by George Webbe Dasent in Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1874.

[62] Skeat puts the dictionary to immediate use: W. W. Skeat, *A List of English Words, the etymology of which is illustrated by comparison with Icelandic*, Oxford, 1876.

[63] Dasent in Cleasby and Vigfusson, *op. cit.*, p. lix.

[64] Sir Edmund Head, *The Story of Víga-Glúm*, London, 1866.

[65] See notes 48 and 56.

in the sources and the excellence exhibited in the choice of stories reveal a wide acquaintance with the whole body of Icelandic literature. The story of Gunnlaug is taken from the *Gunnlaugs* saga, one of the historical minor Icelandic sagas; that of Frithiof, from the romantic fourteenth-century *Frithiofs* saga; that of Viglund the Fair, from the skrok (fictitious) minor Icelandic *Viglundar* saga; that of the mythical-heroic Hogni and Hedinn from the *Skáldskaparmál* of the prose *Edda;* that of Roi the Fool from the *Flateyjar-bók;* and that of the genuine and especially delightful Thorstein from the *Vápnfirðinga* saga, the Weapon-firth cycle, a minor Icelandic saga. The book is excellent reading and could but promote a greater interest in the literature of which they are so small a part.

Magnússon in the meantime had been working alone on the saga of Thomas á Becket for the Master-of-the-Rolls series. Volume I was published in 1875, the same year as *The Three Northern Love Stories;* Volume II did not issue from the press until 1883.[66] With one exception[67] this is the only translation Magnússon made without Morris after the two had met, until the death of Morris compelled him to finish Volume VI of the *Saga Library* alone and with a heavy heart.

In 1877 Rasmus B. Anderson and Jón Bjarnason produced the first volume of saga translations ever published in America. Their *Viking Tales of the North* included their own translations of the sagas of *Thorstein Vikingsson* and *Fridthjof the Bold*,[68] and George Stephens' metrical version of Tegnér's *Frithiofs* saga. While there is no need or value in doing over again what someone has already done, unless it be to improve upon it, this

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[66] *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups. A Life of Archbishop Thomas Becket in Icelandic*, Eirík Magnússon, Ed. and Tr., 2 Vols., London, 1875, 1883. These were Vols. 65^1 and 65^2 of *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, "published by the authority of Her Majesty's treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls."

[67] In 1870 Magnússon edited and translated into English meter *Lilja* (the Lily) an *Icelandic religious poem of the 14th century by Asgrimsson (Epstein)*.

[68] It is to be regretted that the first American saga publication did not contain sagas hitherto untranslated: *Frithiof the Bold* was translated by Morris in 1871 and republished in 1875 in *Three Northern Love Stories; Thorstein Viking's Son* was translated by George Stephens in 1839 as a part of his translation of Tegnér's *Frithiof's Saga* and again by Magnússon and Morris in *Three Northern Love Stories*.

volume by Anderson and Bjarnason is significant, as it shows a saga interest in America at this date, or extreme short-sightedness on the part of the publisher, probably the former, as American publishers are not notoriously poor business men.

Some of the major Icelandic sagas found their way slowly into English. In 1879, E. W. Gosse, whose great friend, Mr. Garnett of the British Museum, was also a student of Icelandic, issued in the *Cornhill Magazine* a brief epitome of the *Egils* saga, the fourth of the great group either to be translated or, as in this case, merely summarized. The *Egils* saga has special interest for Englishmen, as it contains a reference to the battle of Brunanburh. Gosse's epitome deserves mention only as it has priority in its favor. The whole saga has been subsequently translated,[69] though even in that its fate until Eddison's volume came along had not been so fortunate as that of some others.

Vigfusson's edition (1878) of the *Sturlunga Saga including the Íslendinga Saga of Lawman Sturla Thordsson*, which unfortunately has not been translated[70] except for isolated episodes, or *þættir*, contains a "Prolegomena," which remains the best survey and discussion of Icelandic literature existing. In the preface to the edition, Vigfusson makes acknowledgment to F. Y. Powell, and records the evenings spent together in whipping the material into shape. Here a friendship was begun between a foreign scholar and a native Englishman that closely approximates the scholarly results of the friendship between Magnússon and Morris, though Powell was a better Icelandic scholar than his compatriot, Morris. Morris more than made up for this, however, in the appeal to English readers of his and Magnússon's subjects, and in his poetic power and reputation, which gave him a hearing.

Vigfusson and F. York Powell's first joint publication was *An Icelandic Prose Reader* (1879), the first work with selections intended for English students beginning the study of Icelandic. J. Sephton, who in 1895 translated the *Saga of King Olaf Trygg-*

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[69] By W. C. Green, 1893; and by E. R. Eddison, 1930.

[70] The translation would prove very difficult and disjointed at best, since the saga as constituted is a composite of the confused events of the civil strife in Iceland that finally led to its annexation to Norway. It has but recently been rendered into German in the *Thule* series.

wason, began his Icelandic studies with a translation from this reader of *Þorfinns Saga Karlsefni*.[71] This prose reader has been, with Sweet's primer,[72] extremely convenient and helpful to English beginners of Icelandic study.

In a volume called *Summer Travelling in Iceland* (1882), J. Coles included a literal translation of three interesting minor Icelandic sagas: *Thórdr-hreda* (the Terror); *The Story of the Confederates* (Banda-manna);[73] and *The Story of Hrafnkell, Frey's Priest*. It is to be regretted that he did not do more, for one reason at least that he chose sagas that were hitherto untranslated.

The first woman to publish in this field was Emily S. Cappel, whose *Old Norse Sagas Retold* (1882) contains, among other mythical-heroic sagas,[74] those of Ragnar Loðbrók and of Hrólfr Kraki. The story of these is here first given in English. Ragnar's "Death Song" preceded his story into English by well over a hundred years.[75]

In 1883 appeared Vigfusson and Powell's *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, a scholarly work in two volumes on the "poetry of the old Northern tongue." Volume I is confined to Eddic poetry, and Volume II to what the authors call "court poetry." While most of these poems appeared before in English, this volume edits, classifies, and also translates, and gives such criticism and information in its introduction, excursus, and notes, that further work on the subject has been discouraged. It only remains to say of this exhaustive work that the breaking up and arrangement of the Eddic poems seems unnecessary and confusing. The

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[71] Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *An Icelandic Prose Reader*, Oxford, 1879, pp. 123–141; 377–385. Sephton's translation: "Eirik the Red's Saga, a translation read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, January 12, 1880, by Rev. J. Sephton," *Proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool*, 1879–80, No. 34, pp. 183–212.

[72] Henry Sweet, *Icelandic Primer with grammar, notes, and glossary*, Oxford, 1886.

[73] Better known in the translation of William Morris, *The Story of the Banded Men*, London, 1891.

[74] Republished in part in *Völsunga Saga* (Norrœna Society), London, N. Y., et al., 1906, pp. 256–340.

[75] The first of many translations of this poem is by Bishop Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry from the Icelandic*, London, 1763.

translation of the Eddic poems can better be read in Benjamin Thorpe's *The Edda of Saemund the Learned.*

The *Jómsvíkinga* saga, a story of the Viking colony on the island of Wollin, in two parts, the first giving a history of Denmark in the 10th century, and the second, the tale of Pálnatóki, of Jómsburg's origin and laws, and of the Vikings' defeat at Hjörungavágr, has been given to English in three versions, but none of them is complete or unaltered.[76] The first is by Dasent. Sigvaldi, who succeeded Pálnatóki, looms large in the affairs of the Great Sweyn of Denmark and England, and of the two Olafs in Norway. His marriage to Astrid, beautiful and shrewd daughter of Burislaf, king of the Wends, gives the saga a romantic element that justifies our calling Dasent's version a novel with its additions of dialogue and social background.

In 1889-90 appeared Du Chaillu's *The Viking Age*, a popular and beautifully illustrated study of the life of the North. His exposition of the life of the Norsemen is amply illustrated by hundreds of archeological discoveries and by many illustrations in short translations from the sagas of how the Norsemen dressed, ate, fought, and conducted themselves in the ordinary business of living. The book cannot fail to interest the reader, though the scholar is made skeptical of the expository parts (and they are few in the two volumes) when he knows of Du Chaillu's insistence upon the conclusiveness of his proof that the present English are descended from Northern Teutonic stock. The simple explanation is that much of what he claims to be northern was common Teutonic heritage of the Angles and Saxons, as well as of the North. Much again was imparted to the Western Germanic peoples by the long settlement of the Northmen in Mercia and Northumberland, and by overlordship of the Danes in England,

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[76] The first, which will be discussed under the novels, is a free translation with dialogue and matter added to give a complete picture of social as well as of historical conditions, by G. W. Dasent, *Vikings of the Baltic*, 3 Vols., London, 1875.

The second is by John B. Miller, "The Joms-Vikings Icelandic Saga retold," *Scandinavian Monthly Review*, Chicago, Jan.–Apr., 1885, pp. 9–12, 45–49, 80–83, 96–101.

The third is by R. B. Anderson, "Story of the Jomsvikings from the Danish of Fr. Winkel Horn, Englished by Rasmus B. Anderson," *International Magazine*, Chicago, Aug.-Oct., 1896, Vol. I, 1–3.

culminating in the accession of Sweyn and his Danish successors to the throne of England (1016-1042). Du Chaillu's book, however, has reached and informed thousands of readers and students about the customs and life of the Northmen and must be rated as a significant work in any study of the growth of popular interest in a subject so long neglected and inaccessible.

The first of the *Biskupasögur*, or sagas of the bishops,[77] was translated by Oliver Elton. It is *The Life of Lawrence, Bishop of Holar in Iceland by Einar Hafledason* (1890). The work is of value only to those who may be interested in the church and a part of its history in Iceland after the introduction of Christianity there in the year 1000.

All the saga references to the discovery of America are discussed in Arthur Middleton Reeves' *The Finding of Wineland the Good*, a translation of the saga of Eric the Red, from the collation of A. M. 544,[78] known as Hauk's Book, with A. M. 557, both Icelandic versions being evidently from the same source, now lost. Reeves also translates *A Short Story of Eric the Red* (*Þáttr Eireks Rauða*) and *A Short Story of the Greenlanders* (*Grœnlendinga þáttr*) from the Flatey-book. The versions of the last differ materially from the A. M. versions, being from "the vast congeries of early Mss." that have disappeared.[79] The similarity of the two A. M. versions indicates the more reliable source and greater authenticity. The saga is often referred to as that of *Þorfinn Karlsefni*.[80] There is no such saga, though his name should have been given to that now known as the *Saga of Eric the Red*. Reeves' book[81] contains all that there is in the sagas (and that includes everywhere else) to the Norse discovery of

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[77] Edited by Vigfusson in 1858.

[78] A. M. for Arna Magnaean, a famous collection of Icelandic MSS. at Copenhagen.

[79] Arthur Middleton Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good*, London, 1890, p. 55.

[80] In A. M. 544, Hauk's Book, at leaf 93 is inserted in writing: "Here begins the saga of Thorfinn Karksefni and Snorri Thorbrandsson." When the saga of Thorfinn Karlsefni is referred to, this portion (leaves 93–101), or a translation of it, is intended.

[81] Reprinted in part in "The Voyages of the Northmen," Julius E. Olsen, Ed., *Original Narratives of Early American History*, N. Y., 1906, pp. 14–44; also reproduced in *Norræna*, R. B. Anderson, Ed., *op. cit.*

America,[82] enough to verify the fact of their arrival here, but not enough to justify all that has been claimed by enthusiastic historians, poets, and pseudo-historical novelists.

After an interval of sixteeen years Magnússon and Morris published the first volume of their *Saga Library*,[83] containing translations of three minor Icelandic sagas: *Howard the Halt* (*Hávarðar*); *The Story of the Banded Men* (*Bandamanna*);[84] and *The Story of Hen Thorir* (*Hœnsa Þóris*). As in the case of *Three Northern Love Stories*, the choice of the joint authors here is fortunate, for the stories are excellent reading. *Howard the Halt* portrays the valor of an old man, who shows sufficient unsuspected prowess to gain vengeance for his murdered son. *The Story of the Banded Men* is a comedy with the hero a man of low estate, portraying the beguiling of scheming banded chiefs by an old man, Ufeig, whose characterization is the wiliest, and one of the best, in Icelandic. *The Story of Hen Thorir* is the tale of Blund-Ketil, who stole hay in time of famine from a trader or peddler of hens, to give to his neighbors. The burning of Blund-Ketil in his house and the vengeance undertaken for the crime occupy the rest of the story.

Volume II (1892) of the *Saga Library* contains *The Story of the Ere-Dwellers* (*Eyrbyggja*) and in Appendix B, the *Story of the Heath Slayings* (*Heiðarvíga*). *The Story of the Ere-Dwellers*, the fourth of the major Icelandic sagas to be translated into English,[85] gives an excellent picture of customs and religions at Snaefellsness, from the time of Thórólf's first coming from Norway (884) to the death of Snorri (1031), with some of the best character drawing in the literature. *The Story of the Heath Slayings* is a translation of one of the oldest of all the sagas of Iceland. It

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[82] An independent translation of the *Saga of Eric the Red* subsequently appeared, "Voyages to Vinland from the Saga of Eric the Red," *Old South Leaflets*, gen. series, Vol. 2, No. 31, Boston, 1892.

[83] Of the six volumes in *The Saga Library*, Morris translated the first three, Morris' translations being checked by Magnússon with the original; Magnússon translated Vols. IV and V, the style being emended by Morris; and Magnússon alone compiled the index and notes comprising Vol. VI, nine years after the death of Morris. The whole matter of authorship and relationship is given by Magnússon in his Preface to Volume VI.

[84] Previously translated by J. Coles, "The Story of the Confederates", in *Summer Travelling in Iceland*, London, 1882.

[85] Sir Walter Scott published an abstract of the saga in 1814. See note 19.

tells of the vengeance of Bardi for the murder of his brother Hall, culminating in a battle on the heath between men of northern and western Iceland, with the figure of the cunning Snorri the Priest acting as final mediator.

In 1893, Volume III of the *Saga Library*, being Volume I of the *Heimskringla*,[86] or the *Stories of the Kings of Norway*, began the last work of these distinguished scholars. The volume closes with the account of Olaf Tryggvason.

The fifth major Icelandic saga to be translated, the *Egils* saga,[87] is the work of Rev. W. C. Green, published in 1893. This work is not one of the great translations, though the only one, until very recently, we have had of this saga, which is one of the "most perfect as a work of art."[88] The first part tells of the slaying of Thórólf and of Skallagrim's migration to Iceland after having taken revenge for the death of his brother. The last two-thirds of the saga records the life of Egil, who appears an "astonishing embodiment of the qualities of his age and race."[88] The scene changes from Norway and Iceland to Sweden, Russia, Holland, and finally to the court of Athelstane in England. The saga is epic in style, though substantially historical in all its events. Egil towers over all others as an implacable champion against the tyranny of Harold the Fair-haired. Egil best of all typifies the freedom-loving spirit of the Viking age.

Volume IV of the *Saga Library* (1894) contains the saga of King Olaf the Holy, son of Harold the Greenlander. This is the best of all the lives in the *Heimskringla*, and occupies about a third of the whole work. Legends of Olaf's healing blood and of his last stand make him a tragic and noble figure.

George Webbe Dasent closed his distinguished services to Icelandic in 1894 with the translation of two volumes edited and published in 1887 by Vigfusson in *Rerum Brittanicarum medii aevi scriptores*, Vols. 88^{I} and 88^{II} (Master-of-the-Rolls

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[86] Previously translated by Samuel Laing, 1844.

[87] An epitome of this saga was made by E. W. Gosse, 1879. This translation: W. C. Green, *The Story of Egil Skallagrimsson, being an Icelandic Family History of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, London, 1893.

[88] E. R. Eddison, "Sagas and Iceland of Today," *Bookman* (N. Y.), 66, Dec., '27, p. 391. Mr. Eddison has since translated the *Egils* saga for the Cambridge Press, 1930.

Series). Dasent's translations, Vol. 88[III] and 88[IV] of the same series, and Vigfusson's editions appeared under the title, *Icelandic Sagas and other historical documents relating to the settlements and descents of Northmen on the British Isles.*[89] Volume III, a translation of Vol. I, contains the *Orkneyingers' Saga,*[90] consisting of (a) *The Earl's Saga,* (b) *The Story of Earl Magnus,* and (c) *The Story of Earl Rognvald;* addenda consisting of extracts from the *Flatey-book,* the lost *Inga Saga,* of *The Longer Magnus Saga* (*The Saga of Saint Magnus*), and of *The Short Magnus Saga;* and an appendix consisting of more extracts from *Flatey-book* and from *Njáls* (Earl Sigurd and Brian's battle); of Brian's battle (*Saga of Thorstein Hall of the Side's Son*), *Helgi and Wolf* (*Flatey-book*), *The Story of Heming, and The Saga of Edward the Confessor.* Volume IV, a translation of Volume II, contains the *Saga of Hacon, Hacon's Son,* fragments of the *Saga of Magnus, Hacon's Son,* additions to the *Saga of Hacon, Dunstans Saga,* and Icelandic *Annals.* As can be seen, these volumes constitute all saga references to "settlements and descents of the Northmen on the British Isles" and are rather a valuable historical document than an interesting saga, in comparison to the major and minor Icelandic sagas proper.

Interesting miracle stories and historical legends that grew up along with the vast machinery of the church are represented in Mrs. Disney Leith's *Stories of the Bishops of Iceland* (1895). The best of these are from her own translations: *The Stories of Thorwald the Far-farer, and of Bishop Isleif; The Story of Bishop Thorlak of Skallholt, commonly called S. Thorlak;* and *Húngrvaka* (The Hunger-waker).[91]

Keeping up their rate of a volume a year of the *Saga Library,* Magnússon and Morris completed their *Heimskringla* translation

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[89] These four volumes with Magnússon's *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups,* 2 Vols., 1875, 1883, make in all six volumes of Icelandic texts with translation in the Rolls series.

[90] First translated by Jón Hjaltalín and Gilbert Goudie, 1873.

[91] Published London, 1894.

The Tale of Thorwald the Far-farer also given in Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. Y. Powell, *Origines Islandicae,* 2 Vols., Oxford, 1905, I, 407-12; *Tales of Bishop Is-laf, ibid.,* I, 595–96; *Thorlaks Saga biskups helga, ibid.,* I, 455–502; and *Húngrvaca, ibid.,* I, 420–458.

in 1895 with Volume V,[92] containing the history of the kings from Magnus the Good to King Magnus, son of Erling.

Something remains to be said of the work of Magnússon and Morris, especially that of Morris, who is responsible for the English of the joint translations. Vigfusson and Powell direct a none-too-hidden barb at the poet in Morris the translator, as belonging to that class of translators "who have fallen, to wit, into the affectation of archaism and the abuse of archaic, Scottish, pseudo-Middle-English words, which makes the saga sound unreal, unfamiliar, and false, and conceals all diversities of style and tone beneath a fictitious mask of monotonous uniformity and slurs over real difficulties by a specious nullity of false phrasing. The idiomatic spoken tongue of the saga makers should be rendered as far as possible into an idiomatic spoken tongue."[93] Magnússon defends his departed comrade and himself by a clever gibe at a slip by his detractors, but he does not answer the charge or think that aught but the spirit of the criticism needs his attention: "Middle English scholars who confuse *done* (L. *faciunt*) with Icel. *dóni*, clown, are apt to have strange Middle English visions."[94] Magnússon contends that most of the words in the translations attacked are not Middle English, but literal translations of Icelandic originals: as *by-men* (Icel. *byjar-men*), townspeople; *earth-burg* (Icel. *jarð-borg*), earth work; *shoe-swain* (Icel. *skó-sveinn*), page; and *outbidding* (Icel. *út-boð*), call to arms.[95] It seems to the writer that in some cases the context gives the meaning to the translation; in others, that an index or glossary is necessary. Since everything that is likely to add confusion is indexed and explained by Morris, he himself felt that the chief difficulty and inconvenience occasioned the reader by the coinages were reduced to a minimum. Morris wished to be literal in the renderings. "The quaint vividness of fancy appealed to his imaginative mind, and he would on no account slur them over."[96]

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[92] See note 83.
[93] *Origines Islandicae, op. cit.* I, cxv.
[94] *Saga Library*, VI, vii and note.
[95] *Ibid.*, vii and viii.
[96] *Ibid.*, ix and x.

It is all a matter of taste. The student of English, the experienced reader, or anyone interested in words or language finds interest and little difficulty in such translations, which remain for a rather restricted class, as do all the best things in literature, after all. The excellence of Magnússon and Morris' choice of stories repays even the general reader for any difficulties he may meet occasionally by the way. He is not wont as are the critic and the scholar to wax disputatious at the smallest part of the whole.

Picked at random from the *Saga Library* are a few self-explanatory, effective, and almost literal translations. They crowd every page: *banesman* (I, 89); *some cases are doomed* (I, 90); *pretty much of a lackpenny* (I, 105); *way-leader* (V, 262); *on-fall* (V, 264); *ale-wont* and *ale-joyance* (V, 197); *cheaping-stead* (III, 105); *unpeace* (III, 113); *leech-craft* (III, 120); *wood-wroth* (III, 136); *sithence* (III, 141); *winter worsened* (I, 161); *othersome left off blood-offering* (III, 164); and *or ever the battle was joined* (III, 183). Other words and phrases somewhat strained, but always intelligible with the accompanying explanation, can be found, though they are far less numerous: *If he be liefer thereto* (I, 129); *sleepthorn* (death, I, 161); *them-seemed* (III, 129); *slot* (track, III, 129); *misliketh me* (I, 101); *hausel* (voiding of a case, opposite of *handsel*, I, 110); and *of all men the most valiantest looked* (V, 336).

The writer of this study finds at times in the diction of these translations by Morris much force and beauty; at others, unnecessary straining, but he is always interested, which fact puts him rather immodestly into his own select group.

A distinguished addition to English saga literature was made in J. Sephton's translation of *The Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason, who reigned over Norway A. D. 995 to A. D. 1000* (1895), which became Volume I of the *Northern Library*, a new series of translations from the Icelandic. This saga is called "The Great Olaf Tryggvason Saga" to distinguish it from the *Heimskringla* version. The translation is a volume of five hundred pages taken from the *Fornmanna* (foreign or distant, i. e., to Iceland) *Sögur*, published in Copenhagen in 1825. The compiler of this historical and partly fictitious saga of the favorite hero of Norwegian

history drew from the *Heimskringla*, the legendary life of Olaf by Odd Monk, extracts from the *Landnámabók*, *Kristni Saga*, *Hallfreds* saga, *Laxdœla Saga*, *Fœreyinga Saga*, political tracts, and a number of stories and minor sagas not otherwise known. It is a history of Olaf gathered from all saga sources wherein he is mentioned, especially in his attempts to force Christianity upon Norway, and even upon Iceland and Greenland. The legendary life by Odd has given the supernatural touch in Olaf's escape from drowning at the battle of Svold and in the King's healing and miraculous powers exhibited before and after his disappearance; and a didactic touch in introducing Odin as the devil and all the enemies of the faith as trolls. The saga is interesting because of its ramifications; and because its many episodes present completely the strength, the nobility, the passion, and the cruelty of a tremendous personality. It is a storehouse of fascinating little narratives.

There appeared the second volume of the *Northern Library*, the next year after Sephton's saga of King Olaf. It was F. York Powell's translation, *The Tale of Thrond of Gate, commonly called Fœreyinga Saga* (1896).[97] Although primarily the story of the Faroes and their inhabitants, the saga has narrative and human, as well as purely historical, interest in the recording of the rivalry of the crafty, heathen Thrond with the gallant Sigmund, whose last fight is one of the many rememberable things one retains in his saga reading. This saga is the most significant work[98] that Powell translated independently of the learned Vigfusson.

In 1898 Israel Gollancz published as Volume III of the *Northern Library*, his edition and translation of the *Ambales* saga. This is a late saga derived from Saxo Grammaticus and eked out and confused by additions about Arthur, Tamburlane, Junius Brutus, et al. The saga is of little value, but it is important in literature as it illustrates another version of the same story from which Shakespeare took his *Hamlet*.

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[97] Stories of the Faroes were first translated in 1869. See note 53.

[98] In the interim since *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* (1883), Powell translated in 1894 a short *Tale of Thorstan Shiver*, which was published as Appendix IV to O. Elton's translation of the *First Nine Books of Danish History by Saxo Grammaticus*, London, 1894, for which Powell also wrote an excellent introduction.

Four years after his "Great King Olaf Saga" J. Sephton translated in *Northern Library, IV*, the saga of King Sverri of Norway, a saga of the kings of Norway, second in historical importance only to the *Heimskringla*, but overshadowed in interest by the parent of this class.

The sixth and last of the major Icelandic sagas to be translated is woman's greatest contribution to saga literature in English. It is the work of Muriel A. C. Press, *Laxdæla Saga* (1899),[99] who has capably treated the romantic tone throughout. Otherwise only the simplest rendering is necessary to vivify in this extremely interesting narrative such great characterizations as those of Melkorka, Hoskuld, Olaf, Kjartan, Bolli, and Gudrun.

The third friendship between an English scholar and a foreigner, in this case also, as in the others, the Icelandic scholar the greater, led to a joint translation by W. G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson[100] of the very difficult *Kormáks* saga, though the greatest problem, that of establishing the text, had been done for them by S. Bugge in 1886. However, yawning gaps in the saga, a compilation of several fragments, are filled in by the translators' frequent explanations and narrative summaries running through the body of the text, so that the sequence of events can be followed, and the saga as given in this English version presents a fairly unified and interesting story.[101] The translation is number 1 of the very elaborate *Viking Club Translation Series*.

In 1905 appeared the *Origines Islandicae* by Vigfusson and Powell. In the fifteen hundred pages of this two-volume masterpiece containing text, translation, criticism, and discussion, the authors have made "accessible to the English reader all the important texts relating to the colonization and early history of Iceland."[102] Books I-III are found in Volume I: Book I centers around the *Landnámabóc*, giving the history of the colonization;

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[99] Also translated by Robert Proctor, *The Story of the Laxdalers*, London, 1903.

[100] These authors and friends had previously published as a result of a visit to Iceland, *A Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland*, Ulverston, 1899.

[101] The saga is discussed and also translated in its disjointed state in the *Origines*, II, 315–343.

[102] *Ibid.*, I, v.

Book II has the *Libellus or Íslendingabóc*, showing the customs and laws of the new establishment; Book III contains the *Cristne Saga*, or story of Christianity, and the lives of the bishops of Iceland. Volume II gives in Book IV several sagas recording the stories of famous Icelanders of the tenth century, and in Book V, the sagas relating to Greenland and the Wineland voyages. Besides innumerable excerpts from sagas already translated, as the *Eyrbyggja* and *Njáls*, many shorter sagas are here translated for the first time; others are printed in the Icelandic only. A list of the more important translations will give an idea of the value of this work to Icelandic studies and to the promotion of a general interest in them:

Book I (a) *Landnámabóc;* (b) *The Thorsness Settlement* (Ch. 1-11 of *Eyrbyggja Saga*); (c) a short work of early notes, a sort of appendage to the *Libellus*, known as *Mantissa;* (d) *The Tale of Garmund Hell-skin* (Ch. 1-6 of *Sturlunga Saga*).

Book II (a) *Libellus*, a brief abridgment by Ari of Icelandic history; (b) Extracts from codices known as *Grágás*, the Icelandic "Blackstone."

Book III (a) *Cristne Saga*, a history of Christianity in Iceland and *The Tale of Thorwald the Far-farer;* (b) Lives of the first seven bishops in Iceland: *Hunger-waker* (*Húngrvaca*) (containing five); *The Life of Bishop Thorlac* (*Þorláks Saga*); and *The Life of Bishop Paul* (*Póls Saga*); (c) *The Life of S. John, Bishop of Holar* (*Joans Saga*).

Book IV contains sagas representing 10th century life in the South, West, North and East of Iceland:

South of Iceland: *Hœnsa-Þóris Saga*, the story of Thore the Hen-peddler; and *Holmverja Saga* (*Harðar*), the story of the outlaws of the Holm;

West: Parts of *Eyrbyggja;* and of *Laxdœla; Gísla Saga* (here untranslated);[103] *Havardz Saga*, the story of Haward, the Icefrith-man;

North: *Vatzdœla Saga*, the story of the Waterdale-men; *Cormacs Saga; Liosvetninga Saga*, the story of the men of Light-water; and *Víga Glúm's Saga;*

[103] A tribute to Dasent: see also *ibid.*, II, 191.

East: *Hrafnkels Saga; Droplaugar Sona Saga*, or the story of the Two Helges; and *Thorstein Stangarhogg* (here untranslated).[104]

Book V contains the *Story of the Wineland Voyages*, commonly called *The Story of Eric the Red*, from Flatey-book; the almost parallel accounts of this from Hauk's-book and A. M. 557, called *The Story of Carlsemne; The Story of Thorgisl, Scarleg's Stepson* (*Flóamanna Saga*); and *The Story of Thormod, S. Olave's Poet*, approximating the *Story of Thormod, wrongly but commonly called The Story of the Foster-brethren*. Other bits relating to Wineland and Greenland follow thereafter.

The *Origines* is a bit confusing to the general reader in its discussions, as a learned dissertation on Icelandic saga material is bound to be, but the translations afford a wealth of handy and interesting material for the average reader. The *Landnámabóc, Libellus, Grágás, Cristne Saga, Holmverja*, or *Harðar, Saga, Vatzdæla Saga, Liosvetninga Saga, Droplaugar Sona Saga, Graenlendinga þáttr, Flóamanna Saga* and many selections besides have narrative as well as antiquarian and scholarly interest.

From 1905 to 1923 there have been several translations from the Icelandic, giving proof of a constant demand and growing interest. They are *The Saga of Grettir the Strong* (preface signed 1913) by George Ainslie Hight; *Prose Edda* (1916) by Arthur G. Brodeur; and *The Poetic Edda* (1923) by Henry Adams Bellows. A very handy *Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* by Geir Zoëga appeared in 1910.

This completes the summary of Icelandic translations and studies in English up to 1923. In summing up, one might say that in the main the first English notice and interest was in the poetry of the North. Then antiquarians discovered the historical accuracy and significance of the Icelandic prose available to them. There followed Laing's *Heimskringla* (1844), a pioneer work in the field. The historical importance of this account of the kings of Norway was lost sight of in the interest of the narrative.

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[104] A tribute to Morris: see also *ibid.*, II, 576.

Dasent's *Story of Burnt Njal* (1861), at once the best of the sagas and the best of translations, unlocked the treasure chest. With this began a real readers' interest in the narratives of the North, and within a space of forty-five years Dasent, Magnússon and Morris, Sephton, Vigfusson and F. York Powell, Head, Reeves, Press, Green, and Collingwood and Stefánsson have made most of the noteworthy translations that exist in English. They comprise a small group. Vigfusson stands pre-eminent among them as the scholar; Dasent, and Magnússon and Morris, as the translators, not only for the choice and number of their translations, but also for the literary excellence of their renderings.

It is but natural that stories of such variety and of such faithful portrayal of a virile and remarkably active people should find their way into English poetry and prose. Several poems, like *The Lovers of Gudrun* by William Morris, and the *Riding to Lithend* by Gordon Bottomley, are well known, and deservedly so, to the average lover of English poetry, but it is true that few noteworthy English works either of prose or of poetry have drawn upon Icelandic source material compared to what one would expect in a literature that is so rich in other romantic and imaginative treatments of other times less stirring, less vital, and withal less reliably recorded than these of the remarkable little island away off in the northern Atlantic.

It is the purpose of the subsequent chapters of this study to consider the treatment of Icelandic themes in the English novel, and to relate them to their sources, which have been recorded in this summary of translations.

II

De Furore Normanorum Libera Nos, Domine

The longer stories, or novels, considered in this chapter, number eighteen. They are concerned chiefly with viking raids upon the British Isles, and while the themes are drawn in the main from the English Chronicles, the manner and background are taken from the sagas. Many of the stories are juvenile, and it may be added to their credit that, as such, they have an adequate narrative interest. In isolated scenes and pictures, scattered here and there throughout the books, there breathes the reality of the North, but the tales are rather inventive than realistic, with the romance of the French school heightening the already venturesome romance of northern seas.

A short story, *Ulla* (1895), by Edwin Lester Arnold represents such a tale of the North completely clothed in southern dress. It is short enough to summarize and is, moreover, this sort of thing at its best:

> Ulla, formerly a viking, now a priest, tells the story of the braid of yellow hair which is lying across his fingers as he writes. Blessed he was in all things at the court of Halfdan except that no bright eyes welcomed him home from his journeys. But there subsequently came to Ragnhild, the Queen, a seventeen-year-old English girl, named Gunna, who had been sent with a woman-gift to Norway to enlist mediation against pillaging, and with this Gunna, Ulla fell in love; but within a short three days Gunna's uncle took her away.
>
> Ten years passed. Ulla went on a viking expedition, and having found, by going ashore on a desolate coast of England, that a castle on the headland was unprotected, he let loose the wolves upon the fold. In the light of the flames, he saw Gunna standing high upon the parapet. Rushing madly over the dead, he reached her and jumped into the sea as the parapet fell into the seething cauldron below. But the maid was dead, and so was "the light and the loving of Ulla." He took her home and buried her, "and grief dull and abiding" sat in his heart, "and no one assauged it."[1] At last there came "one barefooted, cross and staff in his hands, from overseas, and whispered comfort."[2]

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[1] Edwin Lester Arnold, *Ulla*, London, 1895, p. 45.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Ulla took the cowl, learned to read and write, and in his hut, built near the little green mound, he still tries ever to forget. He closes his story: "At times I go out to the dear, shrouding turf and cast myself upon my face, and tear my white hair and beard, and mock the wild gossip of the wind and waves with my still wilder grief."[3]

Another short story, *Hightown under Sunfell*[4] (1921), is the best narrative treatment, either long or short, centering chiefly on the "raid" theme. It is, moreover, a beautifully written and comprehensive, though short, sketch of Old Norse life. A tremendous amount of social background is written into this narrative of barely twenty-one pages:

Biorn and Leif, young companions, are pictured in their viking home. A prophecy is uttered by Katla that Biorn's way lies westward over the sea, and far it is he seems fated to travel. He listens to tales of giants and dwarfs, but ever he likes to talk of the sea-going franklins. Famine comes and Ironbeard, the king, makes ready to forage abroad. Sacrifice is made to Frey, with blood-sprinkling. Leif and Biorn perform the rite of foster-brotherhood. After the ceremony of accepting a new prince has been performed, he-goats are placed on the rollers so that the keels might go blood-stained into the water.[5] The women stand lonely on the shore as the vikings put to sea. Later, while the raiders are going up a distant river, Leif sees blood. Desolation spreads far and wide on the oft-raided coast. They land and are overwhelmingly attacked. Arnwulf the captain is blood-eagled. The rest at twilight are set upon again and scarcely have time to form the shield-burg. As the ring gives way, Leif sinks wounded into the underbrush. Biorn discovers him and goes to fetch water in his horn, but on returning finds him, his outborn (foreign) blood-brother, who had known hidden things, dead. Biorn leaves the scene and makes his way to a hovel in the woods. A woman and a man, he with a cudgel in his hands, meet him at the door. They ask him in, seeing that he is only a boy. "I am Biorn," says the stranger proudly, "and my father was a king." They nod to each other and smile.

In treatment, the novels in this chapter lie somewhere within

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[4] The first of fourteen fictional sketches in John Buchan, *The Path of the King*, N. Y., London, 1921. This is the only Norse tale in a book designed to illustrate the "persistence of the heroic kingly spirit which links the earliest historical period with all those following."—Preface.

[5] In the earliest times human beings, generally thralls or malefactors, were placed on the rollers: a ceremony of christening now more humanely performed by champagne or even water.

the limits prescribed by these two short stories with the majority of them less Norse in tone than foreign, or outlandish. They have especial interest, however, in that they are written around characters and events well known to students of English or European history. The general purpose of instruction in the past is not once lost sight of, though many of the tales and events are as little authenticated, it is to be feared, as are those of Washington's cherry tree, or the nobility of Cooper's American Indian.

Robert Ames Bennet records in *For the White Christ* (1905) the exploits of a Norse hero on sea and land. The story centers around the courtship of Charlemagne's daughter, and presents his warfare against the Moors. The aim of the book is to give a picture of a militant Christianity striving around 778-785 to overthrow heathendom in general and the Mohammedans in Europe in particular.

The next author in alphabetical order is William Gershom Collingwood, who will be remembered for his studies in Ruskin and as the translator (with Stefánsson) from the Icelandic of the *Life and Death of Kormac the Skald* (1902) and by himself of *A Legend of Shetland from Fljotsdæla Saga* (1907). His three tales preceded his Norse ventures, however, and show more his major interest, that in the folk-lore of the Lake District of northern England.

The Likeness of King Elfwald (1918) is a story of Northumbria, Scotland, and neighboring islands in the years 787-808. Collingwood centers his tale around the burning of the abbey of Iona and the reign of Elfwald II of Northumbria. His author's sympathy is naturally with the English and the great loss at Iona, but in addition to that, his picture of the Northmen lacks the conviction that his English historical background carries.[6]

Another of his tales, *Thornstein of the Mere* (1895), is a better story, as attested by the fact that fourteen years after it had been first published, it came out in a revised edition. It is concerned chiefly with the Lake District of England and with Scotland and

[6] Collingwood's preoccupation with, and studies of, the Norsemen date from the time immediately previous to his trip to Iceland, recorded in, W. G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson, *A Pilgrimage to Iceland*, Ulverston, 1899.

Ireland. He brings together Saxons, Danes, Scots, Norsemen, and Celts in interesting contrast. He has woven into this story, the chief historical incident of which is the Battle of Brunanburh (937), local color and historical references that make a realistic tale. The narrative records the love of a boy, Thorstein, for Raineach, the daughter of the giant Gartnaidh, who inhabits the fens, whither the half savage, implacable Britons have retreated from their dispossessors. The story is Norse in feeling and is centered around imagined Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland. No Lakeland saga has come down, however, though there undoubtedly were oral tales[7] wherever Norsemen sat and drank on long winter evenings, but no sagaman lived to set them down, and the people themselves were cut off from their kindred by feudal society and the Norman Conquest. They were assimilated into the condition of Saxon villeins, and inroads by the Scots in the twelfth century made living insecure and reduced life on the fells to the lowest terms. With this life and the invasion of Eadmund, Collingwood, a belated sagaman, weaves together, as it were fragments from an opened cairn, the story of the hero who gave his name to Thurstonwater.[8]

A third story by Collingwood, *The Bondwoman* (1896), is also located in the Lake country. Its historical episode concerns the first harrying of this district by the Scots under Kenneth MacMalcolm, though this raid serves at the end of the book only to create a scene of confusion, during which the Norsemen come back to their burning homesteads from their places of hiding. Impossible things happen to give the story a happy ending. The Norse elements in this story are rather slight, for the narrative does not need a Norse setting. Few bondwomen like Tate and Deorwyn are found in the sagas, though the purchase of such as they at fairs, and the taking of them home by the franklins to live on terms of not unpleasant intimacy with their wives, are not uncommon. Rolf, the hero, is a witch-wife's son. Generally little good, intentionally or otherwise, ever came from the Finnas or troll-women, of the northern sagas.

[7] See T. Ellwood, *Landnámabók*, Kendal, 1894.

[8] The subject of the Northmen in the Lake district is treated by Collingwood in the "Vikings in Lakeland," *Saga-book of the Viking Club*, London, January, 1896.

J. Frederick Hodgetts writes a story of England and France in the time of Alfred the Great. It is called *Kormac the Viking* (1902), and up through the part (p. 304) that ends Kormac's alliance with Rollo, or Rolf the Ganger, whom he has met in the Orkneys and followed to France, the story is taken from a Swedish chronicle. This book is published by the Religious Tract Society of London, and is what you might expect an Old Norse tale to be under their auspices. The author states that the English part of the story he takes from Sharon Turner's history of the Anglo-Saxons. The story is carried to England because Hastings, Kormac's uncle, wished to harry there, where Ella had killed Ragnar Lodbrok. Hodgetts here introduces Alfred, of whom no mention is made in the Swedish Chronicle, but before he finishes he has Alfred going to Whitby; and Northumbria and Mercia we discover under Alfred's laws. The final reunion of Bersi and Lady Kyartyan, parents of Kormac, long separated from each other and thought dead as the result of raids by enemies long ago in Sweden, takes place at Whitby. At the end of this medley Kormac weds Elfrida, daughter of Edward the Atheling, and returns from a visit to his foster-father, Angantyr, in Sweden to live a happy life with Alfred in England.

The best part of Hodgetts' story is the background he gives of the English of the Middle Ages, of their mode of life, dress, arms, and customs. The interest that Alfred has in the Vikings because he is surprised to find them Christians, which fact serves as the connecting link of two essentially different and incompatible settings, is of course unhistorical and is a particularly unfortunate narrative invention in this juvenile and moral story.

The Norse invasion of Scotland (1262-3) is the subject of Robert Leighton's *The Thirsty Sword* (1892). It is written from the Scottish viewpoint and is hence less Norse than Scotch. It is better narrative, as well as better history, than the majority of juvenile books. The latter part of the story brings in King Hakon's invasion of Scotland and his defeat by Alexander III at the battle of Largs. Never thereafter did the Vikings invade the western isles, and in 1281 Margaret, the daughter of Alexander III, married Eric of Norway, grandson of Hakon the Old. Of this union was born Margaret, the Maid of Norway, whose

death in 1290 brought about the disputes that led to the great war of Scottish independence. The chief narrative interest in the story, however, concerns the revenge of Kenric's "thirsty sword" against Hakon's ally, Rudri (Roderick MacAlpin), who has killed the hero's father and has designs upon the son's castle of Rothesay. According to prophecy, the pirate's children, Lulach and Aasta, fall at his own hand. An effective borrowing from the Norse of the werewolf idea consummates the death of the second child: as Kenric is passing across Ascog mere, a wolf slinks by, and shortly thereafter Kenric comes upon the faithful Aasta buried in the ice with the tell-tale marks on her throat.[9]

Escott Lynn writes in *Edric the Outlaw* (1910) a conventional tale of land and sea adventures of vikings about the year 800. The scene is England and France, and in the course of the story Egbert, King of the West Saxons, is introduced abroad at Charlemagne's court before he ascends the throne of Wessex. History plays little part otherwise in the tale.

Egbert, incidentally, is introduced in a short tale that might be briefly mentioned here. One of the Danish raids during Egbert's reign recorded in the old chronicles of Wessex has furnished the idea to Beatrice Harraden for a boys' story, *The Bravest of the Vikings* (1897)[10]. A viking boy is taken prisoner, but Egbert loves him for his courage and sets him free. This boy, the author says, she cannot help thinking was Frithiof, who in the earlier part of her story has proven his manliness by frustrating the designs of a stranger upon his kinsman's life.

Another interesting historical character appears in Fred Whishaw's *Harold the Norseman* (1897). It is a tale of Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, and of his battle at Stamford Bridge with a Harold better known to students of English history. The usual adventures in Norway precede the invasion of England. There is nothing in the book that Harold might not have done, and it is, therefore, a juvenile book decidedly worth while. It does not belong to that class of unhistorical historical

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[9] Robert Leighton, *The Thirsty Sword*, N. Y., 1892, p. 339.
[10] Published in Beatrice Harraden, *Untold Tales of the Past*, London, N. Y., 1897.

works, which are for grown-ups exasperating, and for children nothing short of unmoral.

We come now to Charles W. Whistler, who wrote ten juvenile books on Norse participation in the great events of early English history. He had the historical knowledge as equipment to write them; he had imagination properly tempered by judgment in his use of minor episodes, and adequate background for his narratives; he had style; and withal he told a good story of its kind. What is true of *Alice in Wonderland* and of the *Arabian Nights* is also true of most of these stories by Whistler: they have that in the story itself and in the telling which appeals to the grown-up man or to the child that somewhat tenaciously endures in him.

These ten stories by Whistler are: *A Thane of Wessex* (1895); *Wulfric the Weapon-Thane* (1896); *King Olaf's Kinsman* (1897); *King Alfred's Viking* (1899); *Havelok the Dane* (1899); *A King's Comrade* (1905); *A Sea-Queen's Sailing* (1907); *A Prince Errant* (1908); *Dragon Osmund* (1914); and *A Son of Odin: A Romance of Old Norway* (1914).

The Thane of Wessex is a story of a great Viking raid upon Wessex told with spirit and vivified by excellent pictures of early Wessex life such as can be taken liberally from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or Roger of Wendover.

Wulfric the Weapon-Thane is a picturesque and energetic story of the Danish conquest of East Anglia. It is a story of the armor-bearer of King Eadmund, a luckless monarch, who, after his defeat at Thetford, is dragged before Ingvar from his hiding-place and slain. The story deals almost entirely with East Anglia, but the end finds Alfred in his West Saxon kingdom a victor over the Danes, and the noble Wulfric living at peace. The martyrdom of Eadmund comes on the authority of St. Dunstan. The story of Lodbrok the Dane and Beorn the Falconer are taken from Roger of Wendover. The treachery of Beorn is there given as the cause of the attack by Ingvar and Hubba upon East Anglia. Halfdan and Guthrum are historic: their campaigns are recounted in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, supplemented by records in the *Heimskringla* concerning the first raid of Ingvar upon the district.

King Olaf's Kinsman is a story of the last Saxon struggle against the Danes. The kinsman is a young thane of Ethelred the Unready, who is claimed in exile by Saint Olaf and takes part in the breaking of London Bridge. The story is taken from the *Heimskringla* as no English chronicle records Saint Olaf in England. The Norwegian chronicle states that two churches were dedicated to him at either end of London Bridge, where his great deed of smashing the bridge was wrought, and where he brought back to the English a king of their own race by preserving the city from the Danes. The Danish *Knytlinga* and the *Jómsvíkinga* sagas supply Whistler with facts of Cnut and his accession to the throne and the interception of Queen Emma in her proposed flight by the men of Thorkel. The Danish saga also records the introduction of Godwin to King Cnut by Jarl Ulf after the battle of Sherston. The character and doings of Edric Streone are taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and later works, all of which hold him in the greatest scorn. He it is in the story who offers to Olaf through Redwald an underkingship in Norway or Northumberland. He even violates the sanctity that protects heralds by planning to kill Redwald. His greatest treachery is the bringing to naught of Eadmund's great fight by suddenly submitting to Cnut. Olaf is first introduced into the story at Normandy, where he meets Redwald and others who have fled from Svein. Upon the death of the Danish overlord, he takes them back to England, where all the action occurs. The final victory of Cnut, his wise and farsighted policy, which makes even Redwald his willing man, and the amalgamation of the two national factions in the marriage of Emma and Cnut, are the historically instructive purposes behind the book. The love of Redwald for Hertha, who was hidden from Svein in the mound of Boadicea, adds a gentler touch to this great story for boys.

King Alfred's Viking is a story of the first English fleet. Alfred's private life is taken from Asser. The burning of the hall of Ranald's father, Vemund, is an idea taken from the sagas, and the details of the Orkney period introducing Jarl Rognvald, Einar, and Sigurd, are of course, taken from the *Orkneyinga* saga. The story of the sword, Helmbiter, and Ranald's desire to avenge

the burning and destruction of his home, which accounts for his service to Alfred, give this story a distinctly Norse flavor.

Another old legend furnishes the story of *Havelok the Dane: a Legend of Old Grimsby and Lincoln*. It is the best of Whistler's stories, even as the narrative he follows is one of the greatest of legends, and is interesting, too, as the most important, with King Horn, of the probable Danish folk-lore survivals. The popularity of this old tale is attested to by the fact that it survives in a Norman-French version, an English version and in many abridgments.[11] They all differ but preserve the main points of the story. The story of Grim and Havelok has come down as a romance; but it is a Christianized and romanticized ancient legend, for the origin of Grimsby is probably older than the time of the Danes in England. Whistler has preserved a definite unity in his story by piecing it together from its two metrical versions. The Christian element read into the old story, he retains by having Goldberga speak to Havelok of Christianity. Then comes his subsequent preparation for, and reception of, the priests. The general dénouement at the end, where Asli, dying, gives gold to Havelok in absolute repentance for his misdeeds, also shows a softening, gentler touch. One can but feel that the legend, thus retold at the hands of a gentler society, stands in the same relation to what it once was, as the *Nibelungen* does to the *Völsunga* saga. From the British legend Whistler takes Griffin's attack upon Havelok[12] and the disgrace and death of Asli, the false guardian of the heroine, but he does not use its account of Havelok as having been first a thrall, and therefore one who might undertake the drowning of a prince. The Battle of Thetford is taken wholly from the Norman version. The boat in which, according to still a third legend, Havelok was found at Grimsby, Whistler uses only so that Havelok might drift therein stores ashore for his dwelling. One might say in summarizing a varied patching that the general effect of Whistler's story preserves the Norman tradition. In treating early English historical material for boys, Whistler

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[11] See Walter W. Skeat, *Havelok the Dane* in E. E. T. S., extra series, Vol. IV, London, 1868.

[12] C. W. Whistler, *Havelok the Dane*, London, 1899, p. 303.

would hardly have missed this story of Grimsby, even if it were not of itself an ideal and beautiful story of love and right triumphant.

A King's Comrade records the arrival of the Danes at Hereford around 792 during the reign of Offa, King of Mercia, and of Ethelbert of East Anglia.

A Sea-Queen's Sailing, told more from the Norse standpoint, is an exciting and romantic story of Gerda, a West Saxon lady of the time of Hakon the Good (c. 935). She is discovered alone on the funeral ship of Thorwald, placed there by Arnkel, who seeks her kingdom. She is saved by Malcolm, a Scottish Norseman, Bertric, King Hakon, and an Irish prince, Dalfin, the last of whom is nobly drawn. After a rescue from the viking, Heidrek, and his son, Asbiorn, on a desolate isle inhabited only by hermits, Hakon returns to Norway, and Gerda, united in marriage to Malcolm, is restored to her kingdom.

A Prince Errant is based on the famous British legend of King Horn. In the preface Whistler states his reason for retelling this well-known story of four kingdoms and of the Norse in Ireland: he hopes in this way to make the English sagas better known. The rhymed legend is followed closely in all its leading incidents. In putting the story into Athulf's mouth, Whistler has added a chapter to account for the adoption of Athulf by Moren, the father of Horn, and for his Northern name. He has merely summarized the exploits of Horn in Ireland, as they interfere with the story. Horn's seven-year exile in the original is here shortened by having Rymenhild, his lady-princess, summon him to her at the coming of her old suitor, Modi. Athulf's wooing of Ranilda of Ireland is in the original, but there is added here a crown, too, for him, at Reynes, Modi's kingdom. This addition avoids the rather abrupt ending of the original.

Dragon Osmund has interest chiefly as a tale of Athelstane and his battle against the league of Welsh, Scots, and Danes at Brunanburh (937).

The last book by Whistler, *A Son of Odin: A Romance of Old Norway* (1914) is Norse and heroic but seems weaker than the romances which he has told about men and events taken from British history and chronicles. These he knew well.

These books need detain us little longer. A general survey makes a few stand out from the general group. Collingwood, especially in *Thorstein of the Mere*, writes imaginatively of the Norse blood mingled with the Celts and the Saxons, and, at its lowest ebb, almost with the soil of the Lakeland borderland. Whistler's boys' stories, especially *A Sea-Queen's Sailing*, *A Prince Errant*, *Havelok the Dane*, *King Claf's Kinsman*, and *King Alfred's Viking*, must always be ranked well up in literature of similar aim and scope. The events of English history worked into these stories of Danish raids, about which events the raids generally center, have a worthwhile instructive purpose. Many of them reveal, as well as imagination, considerable skill in weaving together fragments of the Saxon chronicles, and the sagas of the Orkneys, Denmark, Sweden and the *Heimskringla*.

There are Norse actors in all of these tales, though their interests are naturally subordinate to those of the English heroes. A treatment of these slightly Norse tales belongs at the beginning of the study, and such conceptions of the Norsemen as are here given in these historical tales are naturally the conceptions that the Saxons and Angles first had of the Danish raiders upon their coasts. The ferocious side is all that they knew of them; it is all they saw; and it is all that comes to the mind of most people today who know of the Norsemen solely as the vikings of popular understanding.

If these hardy warriors preyed upon the English and brought discomfiture in their day, they have now been repaid, for their adventures have been relegated largely to stories for the entertainment of children.

It is a wonder, in view of this treatment, that their hardy souls have rested thus long in peace.

III

Adaptations From Sagas Relating to Iceland

There are thirty-two Icelandic sagas proper, that is, sagas relating to family histories and to the heroes and events of Icelandic history of the classical period of saga telling and of saga writing that was brought to a close by the civil war. It was this period of anarchy, recorded in the *Sturlunga* saga, that ended with the annexation of Iceland to Norway in 1262.

Of these thirty-two sagas, six are sometimes referred to as the major,[1] and the other twenty-six as the minor,[2] Icelandic sagas. The major sagas are all available in translation and many of the minor ones have appeared in English either in whole or in part.[3] It is, therefore, somewhat obvious that English writers interested in the sagas could find much material as the source for both complete and episodic treatment, or as background in their English narratives.

It seems somewhat surprising at first to find that so few of the themes of these, the greatest of the sagas, have found their way into English fiction, yet to anyone who has read these sagas either in the original or in translation, the mystery does not seem so baffling. The sagaman was a supreme story-teller. No one would presume to add to, or to improve upon, the characterization of Gunnar, Njal, and their patience-provoking wives in one of the greatest tales in literature. What invention could render more tragic the romance of Kjartan and Gudrun of the *Laxdœla* saga? Who could add one cubit to the stature of Grettir or Gísli, or better weave into a reader's heart sympathy and understanding for the actors in such dramas?

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[1] They are: *Egils; Eyrbyggia; Laxdœla; Grettis; Víga-Glúms;* and *Njáls.* The writer would exclude *Víga-Glúms* from its distinguished company.

[2] They are: *Flóamanna; Kjalnesinga; Harðar; Gunnlaugs; Hœnsa-þóris; Bjarnar; Víglundar; Bárðar; Gull-þóris; Gísla; Hárvarðar; Fóstbrœðra Heiðarvíga; Bandamanna; þórðar; Kormáks; Vatnsdœla; þorvalds, Svarfdœla; Valla-Ljóts, Ljósvetninga; Reykdœla; Vápnfirðinga; Hrafnkels; Droplaugarsona;* and *þorsteins.*

[3] See Chapter I, Appendix, and Bibliography.

With the exception of Maurice Hewlett, who will be treated in a subsequent chapter, only two writers, Sabine Baring-Gould and Allen French, have used the themes of these major and minor Icelandic sagas,[4] and they have merely cut down and retold the stories as teachers who saw in them a narrative interest that could scarcely be matched, and an exposition of manly courage and virtues that is seldom found even in primitive heroic literature.

Baring-Gould's *Grettir the Outlaw* (1889) follows Magnússon and Morris' translation by twenty years, but he actually antedated them by more than ten years in the reading of the saga, and was in no way indebted to them for his knowledge. With the aid of a Danish grammar and an Icelandic-Danish dictionary, and, as he says in his preface, as the result of laborious work,[5] he read the saga and told the story in installments to his students, who grew to like it, and waited eagerly for the period, perhaps weekly, to come around. Some thirty years afterwards he met one of his old pupils, who, wishing to tell the story to his sons, suggested that his old teacher write the tale as a story for boys. This Baring-Gould decided to do.

He was especially well qualified for the task. In 1861 he had gone to Iceland,[6] where he went over nearly every bit of ground

[4] The minor *Kormáks* saga is the subject of an anonymous narrative, blank-verse poem: *Kormak: an Icelandic romance of the 10th Century*, Boston, 1861. In the preface (vi) the author modestly states: "From some of these old stories has been hastily and crudely constructed the following tale, that, aiming not at literary excellence, only proposes to interest, perhaps a leisure hour, and call attention to this much-neglected field of romance." It would be interesting to know who this author was, and what occasioned his or her interest in Icelandic. He may have read the original, but more probably he used the epitome of this saga first given to English readers in Mallet-Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, ed. 1847. This poem in six cantos appeared the same year as Dasent's *The Story of Burnt Njal*. The narrative is much altered from the saga story, especially in the minstrel role of the lover, in the poisoning of the wedding guests, and in the omission of the Bersi episodes, but the story keeps generally to the major theme of the difficulties besetting the love of Kormak and Steingerda. The blank verse is good, especially in its phrasing:

> "'Fair lady,' spoke the minstrel, 'you alone
> Are cause of this adventure, for your love
> The youth you sheltered from the raging storm
> One eve at Gnupsdale, though your father's foe,
> Has come to see you in your father's hall.'" (p. 57).

[5] Sabine Baring-Gould, *Grettir the Outlaw*, N. Y., 1889, p. vi.

[6] A trip recorded in Sabine Baring-Gould, *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas*, London, 1863.

made famous by the adventures of Grettir. This experience and the knowledge it gave him helped him to illustrate and vivify his tale.

He takes the main points of the story but leaves out of the original much of the genealogy and other matters of no great narrative importance, which he felt would only confuse the memory. He does not make Grettir the tragic figure of the original, and therefore makes less of the hero's fateful fear of the dark after the slaying of Glam. On the other hand, he adds the episode of Hallmund's protecting Grettir in the rear by his defence of the pass against an almost overwhelming host of pursuers.

The best feature of the story, however, is Baring-Gould's exposition within the narrative. He reveals great knowledge of things Icelandic. He explains all terms and customs, such as the hobbling of horses to prevent them from straying very far, and goes into detail about such things as dress, beds along the hall, and the houses of turf with holes in the roof,—all things which are taken for granted in the sagas. These details add realism and information to an instructive tale.

Added vividness is given in descriptions of valleys, mountains and places, which he somewhat too often mentions as having been seen in his journey to Iceland, but he can be excused, perhaps, for not being able to hide the results of a teacher-enthusiast's pilgrimage of love. At any rate he imparts his enthusiasm, and it is interesting to note in passing that he was the first English writer, and one of the few, to go to Iceland.[7]

The other writer considered in this chapter, Allen French, is an American. He, too, is a teacher of boys and young men. He likewise tells a story of Grettir. It was followed six years later by his *Heroes of Iceland* (1914 but copyrighted 1905), which is adapted from Dasent's translation of the *Njáls* saga. The great

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[7] W. G. Collingwood is the other writer here considered who visited Iceland, and left a record of the journey: see W. G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson, *A Pilgrimage to the Saga-steads of Iceland*, Ulverston, 1899.

The translators, J. Coles and William Morris, also traveled to Iceland, the former of whom has left a record of the trip he made in, J. Coles, *Summer Travelling in Iceland*, London, 1882. Magnússon records frequently Morris' enthusiastic reactions in Vol. VI of the *Saga Library*.

reception of French's story of Grettir is attested to by the fact that it ran through five editions from 1908 to 1928.

French feels that the *Njáls* and *Grettis* sagas belong to world literature for their human interest and their literary perfection, but he thinks that the translations have never become popular because they follow the originals too faithfully,[8] and because this northern literature has been neglected in favor of the mythology and poetry of the Greeks and Romans. He feels that the mass of detail found in the sagas is of interest to the student but forbidding to the general reader.

He, therefore, works into a condensed and readable form the translation of *Grettis* by Magnússon and Morris, simplifying the language as used by them and reducing to a minimum all matter extraneous to the narrative and to the development of the character of this great tragic figure. In his story he follows the idea he employed earlier in the story of Njal, though the problem was a greater one. The translation by Dasent is so clear and simple, and the narrative itself so straightforward that his task was only that of abridgment, but the number of unimportant incidents in the story of Grettir, combined with the poetical and involved phrasing of the translators, necessitated an almost complete revision in the "making of such changes in action or chronology as would produce a connected whole" and "in rejecting all uninteresting and unnecessary parts." He has thus made a short tale that preserves the essential parts of the saga, and in giving the story of one of the most famous figures in the history of Iceland, he has likewise preserved enough social background to give an adequate picture of life and superstitions of the outlaw's time.

One notable change in the story, French has made for the better. In the original, after Thorsteinn Dromund, the brother of Grettir, has consummated his revenge against Thorbjorn Angle, whom he has found among the Varangian guards,[9] he is

[8] He is thinking chiefly of Magnússon and Morris. He does not lay this charge to Dasent's *Njáls:* see preface, Allen French, *The Story of Grettir the Strong*, Boston, 1908.

[9] Readers of Scott's *Count Robert of Paris* will remember the use in the story of the Varangian guards, whereby a striking contrast is drawn between the court of the effeminate emperor and his manly Varangians recruited from northern Teutonic adventurers.

thrown into prison, whence he is rescued by a rather unsavoury affair with Spes, wife of one Sigurd. This episode the medieval writer of the tale had borrowed from an unpleasant but not uncommon incident of the French school of romances, this particular one being taken from book VI of Gottfried von Strasburg's *Tristan und Isolde.* French has taken another episode from the same book VI: after fitting the tell-tale piece of steel taken from Grettir's cairn to the niche in Thorbjorn's sword, Thorsteinn fulfils his revenge forthwith before all the Varangians, and, after many dangers encountered on the journey, works his way back to Norway. At an advanced age he leaves his home on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he dies a monk in the service of the church. One feels prompted to add that, since the story has been changed, it might have been well to leave out the medieval romance altogether by the simple device of having Thornsteinn die an old man in Norway. The story of Grettir ends to Old Norse satisfaction with a kinsman's revenge upon his slayer.

Heroes of Iceland was adapted from Dasent's *The Story of Burnt Njal* (1861) and, though published after the Grettir story, was completed before it. French was attracted to "the majesty of its theme; to the heroic grandeur of its personages; to its great catastrophe,"[10] where Njal, his wife, and grandson lie calmly down in the burning hall; and to the unity of its action and the poetic justice that brings Kari and Flosi together to live in peace to the forgetting in a somewhat gentling age of the feud between their houses.

French subordinates everything in the narrative to the two parts of the story: the life and death of Gunnar; and the fortunes of Njal's family and the vengeance taken for them. He adds no description, as of Icelandic halls; nor exposition, as of rites and ceremonies, since they are not in the original because of the familiarity of the sagaman's auditors with the scene of the story and with the Icelanders' mode of living.[11]

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[10] Allen French, *Heroes of Iceland*, Boston, 1914, p. ix.

[11] Many creators of background and attempted realism in modern stories could learn much from the art of the sagaman here so masterfully revealed.

Only a minimum of genealogy has been preserved. Clearness of meaning and continuity of the narrative have been the sole aims.[12] Irrelevant episodes, such as Hrut's journey abroad, the death of Lyting and his brothers, the accounts of trials and the legal phrasing in the great suit for the burning, and the battle of Brian Boroimhe against Sigurd, Earl of the Orkneys, as well as many minor incidents, have been omitted. The result is a moving story, though not, except for the young, a substitute for the great original.

Allen French has likewise written a capital story in *Rolf and the Viking's Bow* (1904). A part of the story, where Rolf is outlawed abroad, is located in the Orkneys, and the fighting with the Scots is taken from the *Orkneyinga* saga, but Rolf's meeting with Grani there and his getting the bow from the viking's cairn are inventions, all playing a part in subsequent happenings back in Iceland. The famed Grettir appears in the story. Snorri and others are taken from *Njáls*. The main idea, that Hierandi's land extends a bowshot beyond the borders, is taken from a hint in the *Eyrbyggja* saga (Magnússon and Morris' *Eredwellers*), and the conclusion, wherein Rolf tries the son of his father's enemy and is reconciled to him, is based on the tale of Thorstein Staff-Smitten, translated from the Weapon-firth cycle by Magnússon and Morris in *Three Northern Love Stories and Other Tales*. All these composite sources serve as character and narrative suggestions in a story that is practically all fiction but has remained convincingly Icelandic. The exemplification of personal courage and the prominence of law given in all the sagas are the general saga indebtedness here. Conditions of life, manners, and actions portrayed in the story reveal the author as one very familiar with the saga translations. He combines this knowledge of facts and background with an instinctive admiration for the subject evidenced in the convincing ease with which he handles the expository background. It is a rare thing to find such interesting narrative invention so historically convincing.

It is complimentary to the Icelandic sagas proper that so

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. xxxvi.

few writers have used the major and minor themes in story, though that such should be the case seems but natural to anyone who is familiar with the freshness and completeness of the original narratives. From these same sagas, however, have come our knowledge of Icelandic life and a complete picture of social, legal, and religious customs. They are the treasure trove whence social historians like Mallet, Du Chaillu, and others have gleaned, and it is these expositions, as well as the narratives themselves, that afford a basic knowledge to all writers who would enter the field of Icelandic and northern story.

IV

Extra-Icelandic Themes

The Icelanders have preserved in their greatest sagas the histories of their families and heroes and have given us therein a picture of the gradual emergence of society from a state of violence into one of respect for law and order and of a feeling of justice that must have been, along with their love of liberty and their love of a good tale, somewhat inherent in their race. But they have also saved from oblivion events and men of other countries: witness the *Heimskringla* and *Sverris* saga. They have given us in their distant-age sagas many mythical and romantic tales, such as those of Ragnar Lodbrók and Frithiof. They have preserved in the *Völsunga* saga and the Eddas a complete record of a mythology that was a common Teutonic heritage. The records of Greenland, the Orkneys, the Faroes, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, have all come down to us as a result of the gift of the Icelandic sagamen.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the influence of the great bulk of these Icelandic sagas of not primarily Icelandic theme upon the novel in English. Unlike the Icelandic sagas proper, we find that these have many stories based upon them or expanded from them. One feels almost constrained to say that this group did not so completely discourage adaptation or expansion into narrative. But, while this statement may be somewhat true, it is also probable that the subjects of these extra-Iceland sagas were of greater and more selfish interest to English writers of the novel than was any tale restricted to the scenes and people of the ancient republic.

The Icelandic material that furnished themes for the novels treated in this connection are (a) the "foreign men's" sagas, represented by *Heimskringla*, a huge work by Snorri Sturluson, which is a history of the early kings of Norway, and by the *Jómsvíkinga*, or story of the Jómsburg vikings; (b) the saga references to the discovery of America; (c) the Eddic and the *Völsunga-saga* storehouses of Teutonic mythology; and (d)

slight episodes taken from the sagas of the Orkneys and of the bishops of Iceland.

The lives of the kings of Norway recorded in the *Heimskringla*[1] were available in English as early as 1844. Since then the lives of Harold the Fair-haired (853-936), who made himself king of all Norway; of Olaf Tryggvason (965-1000), who introduced Christianity by none-too-gentle methods in the face of terrific opposition; and of Olaf Haraldsson (St. Olaf, 993-1030), whose healing powers rival those of Becket, are almost as well known as the great heroes of early English history. Olaf Tryggvason's life also appears in English in its expanded form as the "Great Olaf Saga."[2] The saga of Olaf the Saint occupies a third of the *Heimskringla* and appears as Volume IV of the *Saga Library*.

There are ten novels or stories of varied interest and degree based on this kingly material. One is written of Harold Fairhair; two record the general struggles of early Christianity in Norway; five depict events in the life of Olaf Tryggvason; and two recount the days of St. Olaf.

Erling the Bold (1869) by Robert Michael Ballantyne is a rather heroic boys' story that depicts scheming treachery and, finally, open victory of Harold against the bonders of Horlingdal. The writer acknowledges in the preface his indebtedness to Samuel Laing and to Dasent's *Burnt Njal* among other works, and he reveals a vast knowledge of the life of those days, which he loses no opportunity to introduce. Historical figures like Rolf Ganger and Kettle Flatnose, the latter of whom takes the defeated Erling and his friends to Ireland and thence to Iceland, appear in the story. Kettle is especially well drawn. The narrative is poorly handled and is too confused in the face of known historical facts, but it has more social history and background than any other juvenile book on this subject. This fact justifies its existence.

Hamilton Drummond writes a composite story in *A Man's*

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[1] Translated by Samuel Laing, 1844; and by Magnússon and Morris in *Saga Library*, Vol. III (1893); Vol. IV (1894); and Vol. V (1895).

[2] Translated by J. Sephton in 1895. It is a greatly expanded saga compared to the *Heimskringla* version and represents a vast collection of all the tales, gathered from all sources, in which the great Olaf played a part.

Fear (1903). It is an attempt to tell an old Norse tale in the saga style. The time is pagan Norway when Christianity is gaining ground there. Balder grants a boon to Furker, who, greatly in fear of death, chooses that he shall not die until he wishes to. Later as evil days come and changes in his life occur, especially in the loss of those he loves, he gives back the boon and is willing to die. The gentle Balder occupies here, I believe, a unique and solitary position in saga literature. Others among the gods received more worship than did this general favorite in Asgard. The regret of Furker for the changing times is both an old and a recent story. It gives, however, a unified and interesting narrative and presents symbolically a Norseman's view of himself and his country fallen upon evil times. The manner is in the style of the sagas, but the matter is not.

The other tale of the dividing time between pagan and Christian Norway is *The Viking Path: a Tale of the White Christ* (1894), by J. Haldane Burgess. It is a story of the great viking age that was occasioned by Harold's victory at Hafrsfjord (874), whereby he became the first overlord of all Norway. Those who would not, and did not submit, sought homes elsewhere, many, unfortunately for the natives, in the British Isles, and others, not so unfortunately for the world, in Normandy and Iceland. The characters in this book are mainly fictitious, but the life commonly depicted in the sagas, the relations of men and women, the feasting, the fighting, the seafaring, and a Scyld-like final voyage of a viking chieftain in his blazing ship are well done. The story, however, strikes a false saga note in having a converted viking, famous for his courage, win souls to Christianity "by triumphantly combating the passions that were the virtues of the old belief." The relentless Harold appears near the end of the story crossing the sea to crush the vikings who have taken refuge from his rule in the Scottish islands. If the moral tone were removed, the story would probably be none the less interesting; it certainly would be more consistent with its avowed sources.

The heroic figure of Olaf Tryggvason has been described by Carlyle in *Early Kings of Norway:* "Strangely he remains still a shining figure to us; the wildly beautifulest man in body and in

soul that one has ever heard of the North." He is the central figure in five tales, but one to know him should meet him where he appears so often, in the sagas, especially in the "Great Olaf Saga."

M. F. Outram has written a story which explains itself: *In the Van of the Vikings; or, How Olaf Tryggvason Lost and Won* (1909).

A short tale by Mrs. Joseph J. Reed (1865) adapted from Laing's *Heimskringla* appeared early in the field: *The Adventures of Olaf Tryggveson, king of Norway. A Tale of the tenth century, showing how Christianity was introduced into Norway.*

The North Star (1904) by M. E. Henry-Ruffin is the third tale of Olaf. Added to the usual account of the king's life, the author has made much of Olaf's stay in Ireland, of his crossing to Norway, where he sees the "North Star" rising, and of his final acceptance as king. There is a rather detailed picture of intrigue between priests, and of those of the old regime who wish to murder him by taking advantage of his attraction to Gudrun. There are some effective scenes in the story, such as Olaf's reactions to the funerals of Gudrun and Freda, a study in heathen and Christian contrasts,[3] and Kark's murder of the deposed Jarl Haakon; but the author seems totally unable to end the narrative after the battle of Svold. The scene shifts to the desert outside of Jerusalem, whither Olaf has fled (unhistorical) and where he dies in a delirium. This is the best scene in the book and has dramatic intensity, but obviously it destroys the interest one might have in other historical aspects of the story to find such liberties taken in a tale that apparently sets out solely to recount history. The story of Olaf's death is brought back to Aastrid by the faithful Thorgills. The joyful reunion of these lovers proves the cue for which the writer seems so long to have been searching. The general impression one has of the book is that its narrative is tiresome, but that there are scenes that exhibit some power in the writing and a feeling for the heroic and the dramatic.

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[3] M. E. Henry-Ruffin, *The North Star*, Boston, 1904, Ch. 37.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 337.

The Star of Valhalla (1894) by Myra Gross is the fourth story here considered on Olaf's life. It begins with the capture of Persea, a Christian maiden, who has fled to the country from Rome. She is taken to Norway, where she enters the life of King Olaf, who, at this period, is attempting to win the Thrandheim district to Christianity. Some social history and historical characters, as Thangbrand, the militant priest, who in history was sent to convert the Icelanders, and Iron Beard, the last bulwark of Valhalla, or the heathen faith, are introduced. But when by mysteries greater than those performed by Aladdin's lamp, the scene is shifted to a feminine squabble in America, and the unintentionally noble Red Fox is introduced, the book becomes unbelievably absurd and stupid. It matters little that Olaf's cause is successful chiefly through the exemplary character of Persea, the Christian maiden. She deserves some reward, for she traveled far enough to get it.

The last of the Olaf Tryggvason stories, *Claf the Glorious* (1894) by Robert Leighton, is the best. It is a boys' story written by one who understands them.[5] The book justly deserves its juvenile popularity.[6] The early scenes of Olaf's boyhood as a slave in Esthonia and finally as a page and a power to be reckoned with at the court of Valdemar of Russia introduce some of the author's happy episodical inventions. The friendship of Olaf with Thorgils, his foster-brother, and Egbert, an English slave, with the revenge they all take upon the viking Klerkon, and the characterization of Sigurd, who knows the boy's identity, stand out as rememberable. Olaf's relations with the Wends and the expedition undertaken with Sigvaldi, the Jómsburg viking, against Hakon of Norway, all follow the *Jómsvíkinga* saga closely, especially the episodes concerning Eric's saving of the prisoners. Olaf's part here is, of course, fictitious; nor is Sigvaldi recorded in the sagas as cowardly, although he was treacherous to the great Olaf. Scenes in England are interesting chiefly as leading up to the final battle at Svold, where men in amazement see a crucifix rolling and rising in the water as Olaf swims in the darkness away from his last battle.

[5] Leighton was editor of *Young Folks' Magazine*, 1894–1895.
[6] A new edition of the book was published by Macmillan as recently as 1929.

The story of Olaf Haraldsson, better known as St. Olaf, appears in two narratives: *Erling; or The Days of St. Olaf* (n. d.) by F. Scarlett Potter; and *The Fall of Asgard: a Tale of St. Olaf's Days* (1886) by Julian Corbett.

Potter's book was published by the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," and the interest lies therefore in the presentation of the nobility of Olaf's character and his struggles against heathen practices as well as against Cnut, who claimed from him and won the overlordship of Norway. Logic is forgotten or dispensed with. Little mention is made of the failure of Olaf's people to answer his summons. As a matter of fact, the resistance to the new belief was as much, in these early days, a resistance to the method as it was to the teaching. The narrative interest centers around Erling, a boy, taken in a raid by Dag and finally identified to his parents amid the general carnage of Sticklestead. Not much imagination or even faithfulness to history can be looked for from the author of a book, who in the preface to another volume[7] states that it was not surprising to find these Thor-worshippers believing in violence and viking. He adds also that it must not be supposed that they were without intellectual cultivation, for they had an abundance of poetry.[8] He might have added "and of prose," but was probably unaware of the fact.

Of a different stamp is Julian Corbett's *The Fall of Asgard*. It has at times the grand manner of the language and imagery of the Eddic poems. The story opens with a picture of ravens on the battlefield which, when frightened, as they often were, by shivers of the dying, fly away, almost laughing in their weird croaking, to a quieter part of the shambles. In descriptive scenes the story holds its promise to the end. The narrative concerns a boy, Thorkel, who is his mother's hope to restore the Æsir against the new religion of St. Olaf. Won over to Olaf

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[7] F. Scarlett Potter, *Heroes of the North*, London, n. d. This is a volume of stories taken from the *Heimskringla*. Its tales deal chiefly with Harold the Fair-Haired; the Jomsburg Vikings; Olaf Tryggveson (his spelling); Olaf the Saint; Arnliot the Robber, who helped Olaf in time of need and did valiant service at Sticklestead; and lastly, Harald the Hardy, who, fleeing from Earl Hakon to England, met his death at Stamford Bridge.

[8] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. 15.

by the seeming cowardice and desertion of the old gods, he returns to find that his mother has died through the efforts of Einar Thambarskelver to save her in dejection from suicide. In memory of, and grief over, his mother, his old faith is restored and Olaf's men in pursuit see him riding to his death toward the falls. The story does not carry Olaf to his end at Stickles-stead, being concerned only with his establishment of Christianity as the religion of the land. The great naval battle of Nessji (1016) and the characters of the two Olafs, Einar Thambarskelver, Grimkel, Biorn the Marshal, Sigvat the Scald, Earl Swend and his sister, and Erling Skialgsson are historical, though Einar is painted somewhat black for his historical treachery. The four characters, Thorkel, his mother Gudrun, Dalla, and Heidrek, and the redeeming love of Einar, are the author's creations. These and his background of descriptions and of Old Norse life are the best features of the book, and they place this story high among the best juvenile Norse stories.

The *Heimskringla* records the actions of Sigvaldi and the Jómsburg vikings in the Story of Olaf Tryggvason, but the complete history of them comes from the *Jómsvíkinga* saga, which was first retold in English by John B. Miller in *Scandinavia*, a monthly review of Chicago, 1885. The saga was translated from the Danish by Rasmus B. Anderson, and was published in the *International Magazine*, Chicago, 1885. It appeared in three volumes of G. W. Dasent's free translation, *Vikings of the Baltic*, London, 1875. There are two books based on this material in English: *Styrbiorn the Strong* by E. R. Eddison, New York, 1926, and Dasent's three-volume work, which is faithfully, though, freely, eked out by dialogue and the background of the sagas, to present a novel-translation. Both men who have used this material are Icelandic scholars,[9] with the result, first, that their work has the reality which the second-hand dabblers strove to attain; and secondly, that episodes are appropriate and consistently historical.

Eddison records in an appended note that the characters are

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[9] Eddison but recently (1930) translated the *Egils* saga for the Cambridge University Press.

historical and that the main facts of his story are from the short story of Styrbiorn, the Swedes' champion, found in the *Fornmannasögur* (foreign men's sagas, to which the sagas of the kings and of the Jómsvikings belong). The story records the death of Styrbiorn at Fyrisfield against Eric the Victorious, and ends with a magnificent interpolation of Styrbiorn's being received by Odin on his seat in Valhalla. This scene is very dramatic. Where Eddison has allowed his knowledge and imagination to complement his historical treatment, he has preserved the realism and interest of the sagas. The book post-dates the original limits set for this study, but its excellence both as a novel and as a work in this field must be given passing notice. It is especially significant coming but lately from a scholar-novelist who has preserved the proper balance between his scholarship and the art of story-telling. An admirer might be chronologically forgiven if he felt constrained, at the thought of the *Jómsvíkinga* saga, to mention Mr. Eddison's book in passing.

George Webbe Dasent, the greatest of the Icelandic translators and the man who brought Vigfusson to Oxford to finish Cleasby's English-Icelandic dictionary, has made an additional contribution in his *Vikings of the Baltic*, which in adhering closely to the saga of the Jómsvikings, presents true historical relations between the Viking colony, Burislaf of the Wends, and Sweyn of Denmark. It records the defeat of Sigvald at Hjoringsvoe (Hjörungavágr) and mentions Sweyn's going to England with the remnant of the Jómsvikings to fulfil his vow made at the same inheritance feast at which he tricked the vikings to go against the powerful Hakon. It also introduces Hakon and his great-hearted son, Eric, and closes with the rise of feeling against Hakon that finally led to Olaf Tryggvason's coming into his kingdom. There are interesting saga events to repay the reading, such as the setting of the feast where the vows are made in Sweyn's hall; the saving of the captives by Eric; the awful picture of the betrayal of Hakon by Kark in the pigsty; and the innumerable deeds of Bui the Fat, Havard, Vagn, and Biorn in the battle of Hjoringsvoe. Dasent's additions are, however, such as give his long historical theme a romantic touch and a unity which it would not otherwise possess. The women supply

much of this extraneous interest: Astrid, who bathes the returned Sigvald and would not have the other women see him unscratched; Gunnhilda, who weaves her way into the heart of the unwilling Sweyn; and Ingibiorg, daughter of Thorkell of Norway, whom Vagn, the young hero of the vikings, finally betroths, thus becoming the only one to carry out his drinking vow. The story remains very connected and readable despite its length, its many episodes, and its interwoven plots. It is a store-house of Old Norse customs and is written with very definite artistic effort[10] and effect.

The Norse discovery of America, which is frequently mentioned[11] in the sagas, especially in that of Eric the Red, has been made the subject of six novels or tales in addition to Maurice Hewlett's *Gudrid the Fair*. The subject, as might be expected, has been of interest chiefly to American writers, and has led to all sorts of fictional inventions, unfortunately not always so condensed in their romance as Longfellow's *The Skeleton in Armor*. *The Saga of Eric the Red* appeared first in English in 1841, and was the work of N. L. Beamish. J. Sephton followed with his *Eirik the Red's Saga* in 1880. The sagas relating to Greenland and to the Wineland voyages are likewise given in Book V, Volume II, of the *Origines Islandicae* (1905). But the complete work giving all saga references to America was Arthur Middleton Reeves' *The Finding of Wineland the Good* (1890).

There are six stories in all that are based upon the Norse discovery of America. Two of these, *Leif and Thorkel* (1924) by Genevra Snedden, and *Leif the Lucky* (1926) by Clara Sharpe Hough, are very recent, which fact shows that in the novel as well as in newspapers and magazines, we can expect recurrences of the theme whenever huge skeletons or suspicious scratchings are found upon the mainland. That the Northmen saw North

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[10] *Cf.* the Shakespearean diction: "Nay me no nays, and but me no buts," G. W. Dasent, *The Vikings of the Baltic*, 3 Vols., London, 1875, Vol. III, 207.

Cf. also the picture drawn *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 257, of the arrow which summons Hacon's forces, an idea taken by Dasent from Scott. Dasent assigns it to *Marmion* instead of to *The Lady of the Lake*.

[11] For an exhaustive and definitive discussion of this subject, see Arthur Middleton Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good*, London, 1890.

America approximately five hundred years before Columbus is definitely admitted on the trustworthy evidence of the sagas, but there is nothing else to give as proof of a Norse settlement in America. Of course, the subject makes a capital story especially for juvenile reading in American schools and homes, with the historical reference as the central theme in a background of Norse life and customs. Someone should put a check upon too riotous imaginations, however, for the young take their history seriously.

Genevra Snedden's *Leif and Thorkel* is an excellent juvenile tale especially informative of Old Norse life and customs. No opportunity is lost to weave in a true and comprehensive social background. The narrative serves only as a framework to the story, and even children would find it of subordinate interest. The reference to America plays a small part in the story as a whole, being introduced when Leif is sent by Olaf to Greenland, where he rescues some marooned sailors, and subsequently, as a result of Biorne's tales, makes his voyage to America. There is wisely no attempt to portray a fictitious life in America, for the author adds that ruins of Norsemen have been found in Greenland, though nothing was left by Leif in the new country he visited.[12]

Clara Sharpe Hough's story is a romantic saga of the sons of Eric the Red. As a story of Leif the Lucky it cannot supplant Ottilie Adaline Liljencrantz's *The Thrall of Leif the Lucky* (1902).

The earliest treatment of the American theme is *Norsemen in the West, or America before Columbus* (1872)[13] by Robert Ballantyne. The author states in his preface that "those who desire full information in regard to it [the Norse in America] may consult Mr. Laing's translation of the *Heimskringla, or Chronicles of the Kings of Norway*." The saga of Eric the Red is found in volume III, though it does not belong to the *Heimskringla*. Ballantyne probably used, in addition, an earlier account of the saga, which was available over thirty years before the date of

[12] Genevra Snedden, *Leif and Thorkel*, Yonkers-on-Hudson, 1924, p. 189.
[13] The book ran through six editions in London by 1880; it was not so successful in America, for the first American edition appeared in New York, 1878.

this publication.[14] In the tale he adheres to the saga closely, except of course in respect to the series of events relating to the settlement proper. In these minor details as he calls them, he draws upon his "own personal knowledge and experience of the wilderness of America." Of course, we expect to find such knowledge and experiences coming from Edinburgh in 1872 of little help as applied to America in the year 1000. And such is the case. The saga elements are interesting as narrative and as history. The story otherwise falls down. There are Indian attacks; two trips of Leif to Greenland and back (he was not with Karlsefni); the loss of Olaf, Leif's son, and Snorro, Gudrid's son, in the woods over night; a fist fight and capture by the Indians; a search in the wilderness with torches; shooting of rapids in canoes; a little Powlet's painting Olaf's nose; the rescue; a song in the wilderness; Kraki's singing to entertain the savages; and the savages' waving bye-bye on the strand—there are all these and others too numerous to mention. The whole book stretches credulity too far and besides this stretching does not have sufficient interest to justify itself. It is the only one of these six books on the discovery of America that is not written by an American and a woman, and it is both the longest and the dullest.

The last three novels on this subject were written by Ottilie Adaline Liljencrantz: *The Thrall of Leif the Lucky* (1902); the *Vinland Champions* (1904); and *Randvar the Songsmith* (1906).

The best of these is *The Thrall of Leif the Lucky*. The author has a wide acquaintance, for a novelist, with the saga field and uses her detailed information with effect. She notes her indebtedness to the antiquarians, Rafn, Rink, Du Chaillu, Mallet, Vigfusson, Anderson, Tegnér, and others, and it is clear that much of her background has come especially from Du Chaillu and Mallet. The facts relating to the discovery of America are taken from one of the available translations, or the Flateyjarbók original of *Eric the Red's* saga. The duel scene in Chapter VI is taken largely from Tegnér's *Frithiofs Saga;* the crossing of

[14] In the translation by N. L. Beamish, 1841; and in an even earlier book on the subject, Joshua T. Smith, *The Discovery of America by the Northmen*, London, 1839.

the fjord in an Arctic storm in Chapter XIX from Rink's *Danish Greenland;* and Bjorn Herjulfsson's adventure in Chapter XIX and the prose extracts at the beginning of Chapters XXIII and XXVI from Du Chaillu. The verses of Hávamál are taken from Du Chaillu and from Rasmus B. Anderson's mythology.[15] There are also chapter headings from the Flateyjar-bók, so that the book is somewhat of a Norse composite. The story itself is relieved from the riotous imagination of her other tales concerning happenings in America, and confines itself chiefly to the affairs of Alwin, a young Englishman descended from the blood of Alfred. Alwin is now a captive thrall of Leif and goes with him to Greenland in the Christianizing mission of Olaf. A great portion of the book is taken up with Eric's obstinate refusal to listen to the new religion and to Alwin's incurring Leif's displeasure over a concealed visit to Skroppa, a spaewife, whom Alwin would consult about his love for Helga. When the trip to Vinland is made, both Helga and Alwin are concealed on board. After further troubles, Alwin, a scribe and chronicler of Leif's saga, is given first his freedom, and, before the return to Greenland, also his love. A splendid concluding touch to the story and also to the character of the fearsome Leif is Leif's prayer (when he hears of Olaf's death in Norway, and when Eric's resistance to the new faith is broken), that King Olaf might hear this now and know that "I have been faithful to him in his death."

The Vinland Champions is a too heroic boyish tale of the youthful Alrek and twenty boy companions in the colony founded in America by Thorfinn Karlsefni, husband of the famous Gudrid, and son-in-law of Eric the Red. It records Karlsefni's attempts to avoid bloodshed with the Skraelings[16] and portrays further his bowing to the inevitable, that of abandoning his colony, as a result of the villainy of one Thorhall the Huntsman. A short preface to the story retells faithfully for the reader the great names in the sagas associated with voyages to the new country and places the beginning of the tale as an autumn day

[15] All of these evidences of indebtedness are recorded in her preface.

[16] The saga word for the inhabitants of Vinland the Good: probably American Indians or Eskimos.

of the second year of "Karlsefni's settlement on Wind-haven."

The third and last of Ottilie Liljencrantz's American ventures is *Randvar the Songsmith*, a romance of the fabled city of Norumbega.[17] The tower made famous by Longfellow is the home of Randvar, son of Rolf, who stole King Hildebrand's daughter, Freya, out of her father's court. The author here rather ingeniously continues the *Frithiofs* saga. Randvar continues in his belief in the old gods at Freya's tower, and is brought by a rather confused series of episodes, and by his gift of song, into relations with the life of Norumbega, a city founded, the author conceives, by Starkad Jarl, who fled from Norway when King Olaf fell. In spite of vicissitudes and trials innumerable, Randvar is united in marriage to Brynhild, who ascends the throne when Starkad and Helvin, his son, are so dramatically made way with by the werewolf nature of Helvin. The most touching, dramatic, and moving parts of the books are these same scenes in which the troll nature of the son, denied free vent in action, assumes a fiend's nature in the shape of a wolf, and first kills his own father and then hunts relentlessly, when the spell is upon him, the boy, Randvar, by whom the secret could come out. No other treatment of the old Norse werewolf idea, either in later poetry or prose, or in the sagas themselves, is so clear and subtle in exposition, nor so frightful in effect. There are other inventions that are not so fortunate and not so Icelandic. Although the imagined origin of the tower and of the city of Norumbega is invented history, it is both interesting and harmless.

This closes the American theme, though a reference to a romance based on the *Winterfeast*[18] by Charles Rann Kennedy was found

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[17] It is just possible that Longfellow's *Skeleton in Armor* or Whittier's less known poem on the subject suggested this tale to her. She quotes from both at the beginning, but the lines from Whittier, if less suggestive for narrative purposes, haunt the reader more:

"Yet onward still to ear and eye
The baffling marvel calls
I fain would look before I die
On Norumbega's walls."

[18] A drama first acted Nov. 30, 1908, with Walter Hampden in the roles of Bjorn and Olaf, and with Edith Wynne Matthison as Herdisa. Published by Harpers, N. Y., 1908. The theme is entirely imaginary. It concerns a viking Bjorn, returning with his son after a twenty-year absence in America to find

by the writer in one of the guides to fiction. Inquiry from Mr. Kennedy himself at Millbrook, New York, elicited the fact that there is no such novel as far as he knew. No plagiarized version has been found.[19]

The little known (compared with the Latin and Greek) field of Teutonic mythology has been exploited by W. E. Sparkes in *Sigurd and Gudrun* (1912). There is little need of further narrative handling of the myths of these northern lands. The subject is complete with the two Eddas, the *Völsunga* saga and the *Nibelungen Lied*. The gods are unalterable, though of late disbelieved. It is to be hoped that they will remain further unsung.[20]

Allied in spirit to the tales of Northern mythology but not connected with the cycle of the Eddas is the mythical-heroic saga of Frithiof, which was first translated into English from the Swedish of Tegnér's *Frithiofs Saga* by George Stephens in 1839. Of the Swedish poet's version of this great love story there are twenty-one metrical versions in German, almost as many in English, and one or more in Danish, French, Dutch, Polish, Latin, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Greek, and Icelandic. The saga itself is so complete that little is added by Tegnér but poetic diction and imagery to the framework of the narrative. This story taken from Tegnér appears in English prose from the pen of Zenaide Alexeievna Ragozin and occupies one hundred and forty pages of her *Tales of the Heroic Ages* (1899). It is, of course,

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the woman he loved, Herdisa, married to another man, and he learns from her of the lie that kept them apart.

[19] Mr. Kennedy under date of September 18, 1930 writes: "Many years ago I did contemplate writing a novel based on the Howard Saga, but I never got beyond the first two chapters, and they were not published, though it is possible that I may have mentioned the matter in some interview or article, which may have given rise to the idea that there was a novelized edition of the *Winterfeast*, which I have located in the Howard district, Icefirth, in the northwest peninsula of Iceland."

[20] There are of course retellings, especially for children, of these stories from Norse mythology, and some are in complete story form. See Abbie Farwell Brown, *In the Days of Giants*, Boston, 1902; Annie Eliza Keary, *The Heroes of Asgard*, New York, 1893; Hamilton Wright Mabie, *Norse Stories Retold from the Eddas*, New York, 1902; and Padraic Colum, *The Children of Odin*, New York, 1920. Colum's book is an exceptionally clear and unified exposition. It is not burdened with detail and remains unexcelled of its kind in brevity and clarity, especially in the last of its four parts, that presenting the tragic affair of Brynhild and Sigurd. It is, moreover, beautifully written.

a tale and not a novel, but the distinction is one that results only from brevity and absence of dialogue. This Vedic and Oriental scholar tells the tale with skill and imagination in a style that is terse and vivid, and as a border-line work is noted here for the sake of completeness. Undoubtedly, this theme of love consummated at Balder's altar, where Ingibjorg gives her hand to the lover of her youth, would have found its way into at least one, if not several, novels, had its province not been so completely usurped by Tegnér and the many poetical translations of his work.

There are two novels taken partly from the sagas of the bishops of Iceland (Biskupasögur): James Flamank's *The Curate of Steinhollt* (1838); and Baring-Gould's *The Icelander's Sword* (1894). Of the two, only Baring-Gould's tale deserves passing mention. It is a boys' story of Skalholt district and ends with the death of a woman, Gudrun, turned fiend by contemplation of imagined wrongs at the hands of Gregorious, whom she, before her death in the eruption of Oraefa, finds to have been her best friend.

Three novels, unclassified, bring this group to a close. *By Northern Seas* (1887) by Mary Bell was unobtainable. J. Frederick Hodgetts' *Champion of Odin or Viking Life in the Days of Old* (1893) was unavailable likewise, but there is no reason to believe it much different from his *Kormak the Viking* discussed above. Paul Du Chaillu's *Ivar the Viking* (1893) is the result of studies undertaken for his two-volume work *The Viking Age* (1889-1890). It is a third-century tale of the love of the hero, Ivar, for Randalin. It is worth little as a story; but it is a veritable storehouse of antiquarian knowledge and, as such, works in much descriptive background of life and manners that can be found in all the sagas, though reminiscent of none in particular.

There have been discussed in this chapter twenty-five novels on extra-Icelandic subjects. It cannot be said that the reading of these leaves as much as one should expect from so considerable a group. The narrative invention suffers by comparison with the narratives of the originals, and the background is naturally inferior to the great sources. Some few of these tales stand out,

however, as noteworthy achievements. Robert Leighton's *Olaf the Glorious* and Allen French's *The Story of Rolf and the Viking's Bow* are excellent juvenile tales. So is Julian Corbett's *The Fall of Asgard*, which moreover is a superb piece of writing. Its descriptions and style are in the grand manner. Eddison's *Styrbiorn the Strong* is one of the best of all saga novels in story and scope. It is besides an interesting story, characterized by lofty feeling and imagination for the subject.

Somewhat lower in the scale can be placed Liljencrantz's *The Thrall of Leif the Lucky*, and the werewolf scenes in *Randvar the Songsmith;* and Dasent's *Vikings of the Baltic*, a scholarly and novelized version of the *Jómsvíkinga* saga. Much of the rest refuses to rise above a common level and pales in competition with the narrative sources and the strength and directness of their telling.

V

Novels in the Saga Style

All the novels in English written on saga subjects might be considered in a sense novels in the saga style. There are naturally in them scenes, people, folk lore, customs, and social conditions that are derived from the sagas. But the saga style, as here conceived, is a combination of subject, treatment, and writing with this wealth of background.

The subjects of the sagas are the human passions, violent but natural, exhibited in a society that placed little restraint upon them, so that these passions found ready expression in action. Love and the avenging of insult and wrong are the commonest and noblest themes. A fate which destines man either to love or revenge adds pathos to the stories. A sense of justice and a constant striving toward a common law and order to take the place of personal revenge mark the progress of this society, and ennoble it. The sagas end in peace, though often the peace of death, than which there are many things to the Icelanders less desirable, and much more to be feared and avoided.

In treatment, the sagaman spares no detail to give realism and directness to his narrative, but there is no adornment in description of characters and places that were as familiar to the listeners as to the narrators. There are no psychological analyses or discussions of motives. There is hence little of either description or exposition except such as an imagination can read into them. "The reader is left to make his own commentary on events and to divine motives and feelings of the actors without any help from the teller."[1]

In style, the saga is the simplest and purest form of epic narrative, in keeping with a heroic subject. It is neither extravagant nor euphemistic. Nor is it commonplace, but is ever "inspired by a power grim and tender."[2] The dialogue is strik-

[1] Magnússon and Morris, *Saga Library*, Vol. I, xi.
[2] F. York Powell, "Sagas" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th ed.

ing: it is short and to the point, full of saws and brilliant natural repartee. This is the more remarkable because the speech is that of real men recorded in anonymous narratives. Not until we come to the Elizabethan age do we find greater speech and dialogue, and that only in plays, which represent the art of the gifted, and not of the every-day, man.

There are four novels by well-known English novelists that are written very definitely with an eye to the saga style and manner, though only one of the four is about an Icelandic subject. They are: *The Pirate* (1821) by Sir Walter Scott;[3] *Hereward the Wake, the Last of the English* (1866) by Charles Kingsley;[3] *The Bondman* (1890) by Thomas Hall Caine; and *Eric Brighteyes* (1891) by Sir Henry Rider Haggard.

The Pirate is the result of a visit to the Shetlands, where Scott heard old tales and legends still surviving among the Old Norse descendants. His interest in this folk lore had already made him acquainted with Bartholin's Latin work on the subject and possibly with such few things, chiefly poetry, as had appeared in English before this date.[4] Another indebtedness is to Olaus Magnus,[5] a sixteenth-century scholarly archbishop of Upsala.

The most typical Old Norse element in this rather weak story of the parentage and affairs of the pirate Cleveland is the characterization of Norna, who has the gift of prophecy, although her second sight is explained at the end of the book as the result of very natural causes. She has the appearance, the ubiquity, and the accorded respect of the Finnas of the sagas. Hers is the guiding hand of affairs, and her half-mad, half-eerie nature

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[3] Scott's other work, which reveals Icelandic interests from the time of *Border Ballads* (1802) on, and includes such touches as the characterization of Ulrica in *Ivanhoe* and of her death song in Chapter XXXI, can be found in Farley, *op. cit.*, pp. 175 ff.

Kingsley in 1874 visited America and lectured on "The First Discovery of America." He had a deep appreciation of Icelandic. He called Snorri Sturluson, "the Homer of the North." He used among his illustrations of northern story, the *Heimskringla* tale of Thormod with Olaf at Sticklestead—certainly a good one. Kingsley's lectures were subsequently published: *Lectures delivered in America in 1874*, London, 1875.

[4] See Appendix and Conrad Nordby, *op. cit.*

[5] *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, Romae, 1555. See the *Pirate*, notes 5 and 6.

usurps what other interest there may be in the story. Her apparent pre-vision, her dress of wadmal, her den on the rocky cliff, her sudden appearances in lonely and desolate places, her unexpected arrivals at the habitations of men, her story of Dwarfie Stone told to Minna and Brenda at the dead of night, and her poking around in the ruins of St. Ninian, are things that have an Old Norse savor. They seem anachronistic in the story, though well done of themselves.

The other chief Norse element is the characterization of Halcro, a pale descendant of the old skalds, and more particularly, according to Scott, of one Haco the Golden-Mouthed, who came to Zetland with Harold Harfager. It is to be noted that Halcro's hearers find his stories and songs somewhat like the tales of old and long-winded men, and that therefore he has not the respectful audience of his ancient prototypes. The songs he sings are inventions of Scott.

The drinking at the feast of Magnus Troil and the whale that comes ashore are obvious interpolations that with other saga borrowings add but slightly to the book's saga style in respect to subject and treatment. In the matter of writing it has no resemblance to the sagas. If Scott wished to make it so, he could not succeed because he knew nothing of Norse but its translated poetry, and its prose in excerpts, and those from Mallet or from the medium of another language.

The second novel in this group is *Hereward the Wake*, which is a direct imitation of the style of the sagas. Kingsley's interest in the sagas and the spirit of the north can be seen otherwise in his *Ode to the Northeast Wind* and *The Longbeard's Saga;* his heroic sympathies are previously attested to by his treatment of the Elizabethan heroes in *Westward Ho!* (1855). Hereward is half Dane, and consequently inherits a hatred of the West Saxons, whereby he refuses to fight under Harold and is later forced to fight for himself in the fens around Ely against the Norman invaders.

Hereward's career is very similar to that of saga heroes. He is unruly in youth and performs mighty feats and deeds of derring-do, that finally lead to outlawry and wanderings abroad. In the north, in Cornwall, in Ireland, and in Flanders his deeds

add to his early reputation, which is climaxed by his skill and daring exhibited against William the Conqueror in the refuge at Ely and in the last stand in the forest. The admiration which the book arouses for ideals of manliness and heroism is a reaction similar to that which one obtains from the sagas. Hereward is a passionate, implacable enemy, and a viking in spirit, who seems to have inherited from distant ancestors their irresistible fits of berserk madness.

In the actual writing there is little of saga resemblance except its directness, which Kingsley undoubtedly felt and partly catches in the field that Laing and Dasent had so recently expanded. Otherwise the spirit of the book is unmistakably Scandinavian, even if removed from natural haunts and concerned with distant themes.

The third novel is *The Bondman* by Thomas Hall Caine. It is a story of crimes and revenge that aims at the effect of the sagas. The scenes are laid in Iceland and on the Isle of Man at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The plot is briefly as follows:

> Stephen Orry, a worthless seaman, marries the daughter of the Governor-General of Iceland and deserts her before a son, Jason, is born. Twenty years later at his mother's death-bed Jason vows vengeance upon his father and his father's house. The dissolute Orry has meanwhile gone to the Isle of Man, where he has married a terrible creature. The needs of a son, Sunlocks, cause Orry to reform. This son, sent to Iceland to school, is commissioned to find Jason, but fails to do so. In trying to wreck, and then to save, an incoming vessel, Orry is fatally hurt, but is rescued from drowning by Jason, who has come to carry out his vow. Jason learns all from his father's delirium. It is hardly necessary to go on, except to add that Providence destines Jason finally to bless those whom he has sworn to kill.

This unpleasant story is not relieved by its ending. The uncurbed, elemental natures come too close to home in the Napoleonic period and lack the softening which the sanctity of classics and remoteness of age give to such themes. Only the most terrible of the sagas are unrelievedly brutal; none of them are sordid. Orry would not have lasted long in the older Iceland. But it is quite needless to point out the many things that are unsagalike. The story attempts only the spirit of the sagas.

In that, too, it fails, unless one consider that the desire for revenge, and the possession of unnatural desires are Icelandic, or derived from Icelanders in imitation of their hardihood.

The last novel of this group is Sir Henry Rider Haggard's *Eric Brighteyes* (1891). It is a romance of Scandinavian vikings in Iceland with imaginary history added, and both as a story and as a novel in the saga style it has great merit. The writer would place it high among all the saga novels, and vastly superior to the others in this chapter written in the saga style: it is Icelandic in theme; it is true to the spirit and the subject of the greatest of the sagas; it is comprehensive; it has the dialogue and repartee reminiscent of the originals; it is an extremely interesting heroic tale that carries the reader back to the times of which it is written; it has implied and not expository characterization; and it is written with imagination.

Rider Haggard knows the sagas, so that his use of material seems almost instinctive. The wonder and pity is that he did not write more upon them. He wrote this one "difficult experiment to bring readers to the sagas."[6] The excellence of it and his grasp of the field might easily have led to more excursions by one who had traveled over the ground where Njal was burnt and saw evidences of the fire and the curd of the whey; and who speaks of the subject as: "Too ample, too prolix, too crowded with detail, they cannot vie with the epics of Greece in art, but in pictures of life, simple and heroic, they fall beneath no literature in the world, save the Iliad and the Odyssey alone."[7]

Eric Brighteyes is a book to be read and not to be talked about by one who is interested in this subject. Suffice it to say, that Eric in his outlawry, his fear of the dark, and his last stand with Skallagrim at Mosfell bears a great likeness to Grettir, upon whom he is somewhat modeled. Great scenes like that in which Eric is wedded to Gudrud on the high seat in the empty hall, are scattered throughout the story. Typical dialogue and conversation are Skallagrim's shout as he transfixes the man who has broken up his home: "Bid Thorunna

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[6] Henry Rider Haggard, *Eric Brighteyes*, London, 1891, p. x.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. x.

draw that splinter forth and heal the hole with kisses;" and Eric's comment: "Among so many [to be revenged upon], there is room to pick and choose." This language has the saga ring and brilliance.

The Pirate is not improved by its greatly paled Old Norse touches. *Hereward the Wake* has the heroic and manly spirit of the northern sagas, but not the common life and other varied atmosphere. *The Bondman* "out-sagas the sagas" in a small and worst part of them, namely, in the horrors, and to them are added unnatural and unfaithful touches, that bring revulsion. But *Eric Brighteyes* is an essay in the saga style, Icelandic in theme, treatment, and details and spirit of writing. Furthermore, the fact that the narrative is not drawn from the sagas but seems as if it might have been, shows how completely Rider Haggard was equipped, and also how instinctively he has used his knowledge in the writing of this novel.

VI

Maurice Hewlett

Of all the novelists who have written on Icelandic themes, Maurice Hewlett has made the most distinctive contribution in characterization, in variety of life depicted, and in human interest. In short, he has written the best novels, considered as a group, on this subject. If a general criticism could be made of the entire collection of English novels on saga themes, one might say that the authors have too generally concerned themselves with narrative expansion, when story-telling is an art in which the authors of the Icelandic sagas themselves excelled. Better it is to read the sagas themselves if the story alone is desired. It is very doubtful whether even the greatest English story-tellers could improve upon the narrative in such stories, as the *Njáls*, *Gísli*, *Grettis*, *Laxdœla*, and *Egils* sagas.

Expansion the stories need, but Maurice Hewlett has almost alone perceived the direction. He learned first the art of omission of much that existed in his sources. Incidents and situations so crowd the pages of the sagas that it is practically impossible to choose for story purposes all the small episodes in even the shorter sagas. There is no need to invent more. The saga happenings are as interesting as any that could be superadded; moreover most of them actually occurred. There is nothing worse than an unhistorical historical novel. Hewlett never invents incident; he tries only and always to account for it.[1] Again, he gives little more than an indication of the landscape, for the reason that he states very clearly: "Atmosphere, then landscape painting, purple shreds and patches, are not in my original, nor to be looked for here."[2] Lastly, in conformity to the saga style, he does not use rhetoric to enhance plain deeds, which were described by the sagaman graphically, rather than picturesquely, because all the tale-listeners, as well as the tale-teller, knew of the deeds he was recounting.

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[1] Maurice Hewlett, *Light Heart*, N. Y., 1920, p. xi.

Hewlett found that the sagas omitted "in their nakedness, things that were essential to a tale for modern understanding; and the chief of these things is human nature. The secret springs of conduct—instinct, emotion, passion—are scarcely hinted at. Character itself must be inferred."[2] Hewlett undertakes to supply this deficiency. He depicts his characters as having fundamentally very much in common with the men and women of today, revealing thereby that, though circumstances of living and conditions of different ages alter the facts and happenings of life, human nature remains essentially the same and has certain abiding qualities. It is this human quality that makes Hewlett's work good reading. Facts and history are subservient in it to an absorbing human interest. Remaining true to the sagas, Hewlett has men dealing and talking with men.[3]

Hewlett has likewise removed much of the starkness from the sagas, or at least, chosen such sagas or parts of them as permitted an elimination of much of the violence and bloodshed that would preclude the presentation of enduring human life to his, a gentler age. The astringency in them he has "been at pains to soften by a few lines of dialogue, by an aside of my own, by a comment here and there, or by a deliberate evocation of character." He has applied "encouragement or stimulus as the case may be and seemed to require," but has done "no violence to the dignity of the original."[4]

It seems natural that the medievalist who wrote *Earthwork Out of Tuscany* (1895), *The Masque of Dead Florentines* (1895), *Forest Lovers* (1898), *Little Novels of Italy* (1899), and *The Road in Tuscany* (1904); and that the historical novelist who wrote *Richard Yea and Nay* (1900) and *The Queen's Quair* (1904), should have both romantic and historical interest in the saga material. It records a real but distant and different past. But Hewlett's attempts at the realistic, modern theme in the so-called Senhouse[5] novels and in *The Stooping Lady* (1907)

[2] *Ibid.*, p. x.
[3] Maurice Hewlett, *Last Essays*, London, 1924, p. 100.
[4] *Light Heart*, *op. cit.*, p. xi.
[5] The name of a character in *Halfway House* (1908); *Open Country* (1909); and *Rest Harrow* (1910).

hold forth little hope that their author could give lifelike and human treatment to any theme, to say nothing of stories from the sagas. Hewlett avoids trouble, however, by adhering to the incidents of his sources. His six Icelandic novels[6] are a greater contribution to the novel than the pages that record the gipsy-vagabond-philosopher, and the butcher-socialist lover of a lady of high estate.[7] The fact remains that Hewlett's work is very uneven. His best prose is that of Italy and the Middle Ages; his worst, that of contemporary England. His saga novels, though the last of his work, have the good qualities of his first novels, and eliminate the worst of his later realistic excursions.

This unevenness in quality has an explanation. Hewlett never wished primarily to be a novelist, and what he wrote came as a result first of the initial reception accorded *Forest Lovers*, and later as a result of economic necessity, when his aspirations to write poetry failed of hoped-for financial or other return. Hewlett's intimate views on the novel expressed in letters[8] that were not originally intended for publication, give all that need be said of defeated hopes and forced labor:

(a) "No doubt I have done well; no doubt I have also increased my style of living; no doubt that has meant I *must* write novels; and that involves that I do them not so well, for what I do of necessity, I do as an exercise."[9]

(b) "That [living in a cottage] is the only way of escaping the degrading occupation of writing bad novels—novels in which I don't myself for one moment believe."[10]

(c) "I am not a novelist, who is an observer, but always begin with an idea or a person and weave the tale round about that."[11]

(d) "My poor foolish trick of story-telling has been cut down to almost nothing, and America will have no dollars for me next year, from the look of things."[12]

(e) "Besides, I am out of conceit with novels as a literary form. I still do them but only because I want to pay bills with them. I think the vogue is

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[6] *A Lovers' Tale* (1915); *Frey and His Wife* (1916); *Thorgils* (1917); *Gudrid the Fair* (1918); *The Outlaw* (1920); *Light Heart* (1920).

[7] Maurice Hewlett, *The Stooping Lady* (1907).

[8] *The Letters of Maurice Hewlett to which is added a Diary in Greece, 1914*, Lawrence Binyon, Ed., London, 1926.

[9] *Ibid.*, *Diary*, p. 78 (written 1905).

[10] Letter to E. V. Lucas, Jan. 29, 1917, *ibid.*, p. 169.

[11] Letter to Professor Lewis Chase, May 5, 1917, *ibid.*, p. 172.

[12] Letter to E. V. Lucas, Aug., 1914, *ibid.*, p. 143.

passing much from them. My own taste is for something nearer the bone.[13]

(f) "The sooner you can get me £10 a week the better. I am absolutely dished as novelist, though going strong a man and brother . . . The springs of invention—uneven the course—don't run in that direction any more."[14]

(g) "I ought to be writing a novel—since I must live, and expensively—but music calls me loud and clear . . ."[15]

These excerpts from letters and the diary covering the years 1905-1921 can be compared with other excerpts that show his predilection for poetry:

(a) "The truth is, I write everything and approach everything as a poet . . . A poet I ought to have been . . . I use the poetic method entirely . . . stuff myself with the subject, drench myself, and then let it pour out as it will. I never put conscious or deliberate brain work into a book."[16]

(b) "You must live there [in a cottage] if you want to write verses. And I do, more than ever. As poor, yet making many rich."[17]

(c) "I shall never be a poet, though I have never wanted to be anything else—but it's true that I can't to this day write a novel, or anything at all, unless I conceive it and try to execute it as a poet would his poem."[18]

(d) "Poetry (the dreaming in it and the struggle to record it) has been from my childhood up a thing (like love) so extraordinarily solemn and sacred that I have always been diffident as to my having any power over it, or because of it."[19]

These intimate confessions can but be believed. His final poetic hopes were centered in composing an epic poem called *The Song of Man*, which was to be "a history of that futile animal and of the aboriginal struggle between the lust to possess and the instinct to be free."[20] The poem, of which he sketched an outline in 1917, was to extend through twenty books, but it never became more than a fragment, as he so naïvely says: "not for want of courage, but for want of brains."[21]

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[13] Letter to Dr. James A. Spalding, Nov. 24, 1921, *ibid.*, letter 290.
[14] Letter to J. C. Squire, June 4, 1919, *ibid.*
[15] Letter to Henry Newbolt, Dec. 22, 1910, *ibid.*, letter 20.
[16] Letter to Milton Bronner, Dec. 29, 1907, *ibid.*
[17] Letter to E. V. Lucas, Jan. 1, 1917, *ibid.*, p. 169.
[18] Letter to Lawrence Binyon, Apr. 6, 1909, *ibid.*, p. 98.
[19] Letter to Henry Newbolt, May 11, 1909, *ibid.*, p. 99.
[20] Letter to Mrs. Welby-Everard, May 15, 1917, *ibid.*, p. 174.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 174. The design of the poem outlined by chapter headings here would test the powers of a Milton:

While Hewlett was thus planning his monumental work, he was writing his saga novels. His novels appeared, but his epic poem was still "cooking in the pan"[22] in 1920, when he was fifty-nine years of age.

Strange it is, that Hewlett has left little record of the interest that first drew and held him to the sagas. Little evidence other than the six novels themselves is likely to appear,[23] except three short notices scattered throughout his published work.[24] Had he left more, there is no reason to suppose that his interest in the sagas as stories or as possible sources for novel treatment would have been altered in tone from what he has left us in the preface to *Light Heart* and in the few instances cited.[25]

Prelude: The Children of the Earth (The Creation); I. The Last-born (Man, in fact); II. The Wanderers (Primitive Man); III. The Patriarchs (Abraham, etc.); IV. The God-Makers (Egypt, Crete, Moses); V. Empire (Babylon, Persia); VI. The Reasoners (Greece, Socrates); VII. The Tyrants (Rome, Carthage); VIII. Christus; IX. The Barbarians (Attila, Theodoric); X. The Pontiffs; XI. Islam; XII. Chivalry (Roland, Charlemagne); XIII. Il Talento (Renaissance); XIV. The Hammer (Luther); XV. The Hammer (Philip II); XVI. The Bloody Cross (St. Bartholomew); XVII. Revolt (French Revolution and religious wars); XVIIII. The Last Struggle.
Envoy: The Return.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[23] Mr. Lawrence Binyon, the editor of Hewlett's letters and a very good friend of his besides, has very kindly informed the writer that he remembers nothing of this matter either from conversation or from unpublished letters.
Mrs. G. M. P. Welby-Everard, who is Maurice Hewlett's literary executor, also has graciously written that she has "no notes of his that relate to his interest in the matter."

[24] (a) "Do you think your baronet (or is he a kt?) would like to embark upon a set of the sagas re-told? The unknown first and later on, the known. I have just done one of them which pleases me—and ought to please boys and such unsophisticated creatures. As you know, there is next to no sex in them. In the one [*A Lovers' Tale*] I have done —none at all. But a d —d good tale.
"I daresay you know how I do them. I am a knowing hand at a fake, of course—and I contrive that what I add—which is what I add for myself when I am reading them--shall be in the manner. They are too good to be unpopular—and I think I know why they are so. Well, there it is. I am thinking of doing the whole set—and would like somebody to take them up." Letter to E. V. Lucas, Nov. 7, 1916, *Letters*, Ed. Binyon, *op. cit.*, p. 156–7.
(b) An essay on the *Landnámabók* with a brief summary from that of men and customs relating to the early settlement of Iceland, which review Hewlett concludes with "There will nevermore be room in the world for things like that, but it is pleasant to know of them," Maurice Hewlett, "Landnáma," an essay in *In a Green Shade*, London, 1920.
(c) A reference to manners and speech of men in the sagas, especially in their love making, and to the position of women, "Scandinavian England," an essay in *Last Essays*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–101.

[25] See note 24.

He says that the saga he has retold pleased him; that it is "a d——d good tale," that the sagas are "too good to be unpopular;" that he is thinking "of doing the whole set;" and of the life and the people of the *Landnámabók*, that "There will nevermore be room in the world for things like that, but it is pleasant to know of them." These remarks bespeak a very positive interest and pride in his work with the saga novels and with the sources from which he derived them. This note does not coincide with his professed dislike for the novel, which he felt he was forced to write for his daily bread, nor with his oft-repeated disparagement of his work in general.

The fact appears to be that after an unfortunate excursion into the realistic field, this medievalist and romanticist relatively late in his life turned his attention to the sagas. The romance in them found a sympathetic reader. The brevity of them, their nakedness, and their varied and truthful human portraits invited a trial at retelling and expanding. The first attempt, having proved pleasant in the doing and successful in the result, led to the rest. We have in these last six novels the best since his *The Queen's Quair* and *Richard Yea and Nay*, because they were suited to his romantic interests and nature, and because he approached the task by choice and less of necessity.

The excellence of Hewlett's saga novels as a group compared with the work of other novelists on saga subjects merits the assertion that he has found the key to their narrative possibilities. The subjects he chose and the use he made of the material selected can best be discussed in an examination of the six novels separately, for they are designed to portray a varied and complete picture of the enduring human nature that is revealed in the records of these people who seem so unreal and distant only because later circumstances and conditions of life have altered.

A Lovers' Tale (1915)

A Lovers' Tale, the first of Maurice Hewlett's saga stories, is based on the *Kormáks* saga, which is available in English in three versions: the first, an abstract in Mallet-Percy-Black-

well's *Northern Antiquities*;[26] the second, a translation by W. G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson, *The Life and Death of Cormac the Skald*, Ulverston, (1902); and the third, *Cormac Saga* (1905), a translation by Vigfusson and Powell.[27] Hewlett makes no mention of Blackwell's abstract for the obvious reason that this flippant and wholly inadequate narrative summary was superseded by the subsequent translations. The *Origines Islandicae* was his testament, and introduced the story to him, but he found it "critical and crabbed,"[28] when, after he had first become aware of the narrative possibilities of the tale, he looked further into the sources and found Collingwood and Stefánsson's translation. This last rendering is more genial and more complete. The authors also give this very disjointed saga a semblance of unity by filling in gaps in the narrative to eke out the Icelandic original.

The first evidence of Hewlett's interest in saga material of any kind is a poem published by him in November, 1913.[29] It is on this same Cormac, the son of Ogmund and the hero of the *Kormáks* saga. When the idea came to Hewlett to retell the sagas, he saw the possibilities of the story of Cormac. Cormac was a poet[30] besides, and that fact no doubt recommended the saga to a novelist who would be, first and last, a poet himself. If Hewlett would write of a poet, he had a choice of five sagas in which the hero is a skald and in all of which a love element is present. The first and most capable of narrative treatment is the *Kormáks* saga. It is also the best known. The second is *Gunnlaugs* with the story of Helga and Hrafn already complete in itself as Morris' translation reveals. The third is the saga of Hallfred, the troublesome poet, which has a certain resemblance to the *Kormáks* saga in Kolfinna's likeness to Steingerd. The most interesting part of the saga, however, is Hallfred's relations with Olaf Tryggvason. The fourth is *Bjarnar Saga Hitdælakappa* (Hitdale-champion), a story which bears some similarity

[26] P. H. Mallet—Thomas Percy, *Northern Antiquities*, Ed. J. A. Blackwell, London, 1847, pp. 321–339.

[27] Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *Origines Islandicae*, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1905, II, 315–343.

[28] Maurice Hewlett, *A Lovers' Tale*, London, N. Y., 1915, p. 294.

[29] "Cormac, Son of Ogmund," *English Review*, 15: 483–8, Nov., 1913.

[30] Cormac is mentioned in *Landnámabók;* in *Egils* saga (Ch. 85 of Green's translation); in list of poets, *Skáldatal* of the Prose *Edda;* et al.

to *Gunnlaugs*. The fifth is the saga of Thormod Bersason, called *Kolbrúnarskald*, because the verses are written to Thorbjörg, named *Kolbrún*, from her coal-black eyebrows.

The *Kormáks* saga was written from earlier versions in the great era of saga writing which dates around 1250. It seems now to be only a framework for eighty verses, of which sixty-five are cited as by Cormac himself. Hewlett paraphrases many of these poems, and gives thereby further evidence that the appeal of the saga for him lay in the fact that it concerned a poet and his works.

The story is likewise very old and goes back to the tenth century, the era before Njal in the south, Snorri in the west, Gudmund in the north, and Hall o' Side in the east, all great men, through whose efforts the law of umpirage by just and learned men took the place of trial by force and wager of battle. This saga is the most primitive piece of Icelandic prose writing that has come down, and it seems a natural starting place for Hewlett, especially as he found such possibilities in the story.

The lack of unity occasioned by a rough and broken style, by sudden transitions and lack of connection, by undue details evidently interpolated from a lost saga of Bersi and from the tale of Midfirth-Skeggi, Hewlett has repaired admirably. Hewlett turns this saga, loose and disjointed, of abrupt beginning and little coherence, into a unified tale by the insertion of human nature and the logic of human events. In the saga he finds Cormac persuasive of tongue, flashing in retort, impractical in habits of mind, impulsive, perverse, faithful, and full of fanciful imaginings and feelings; he makes him more human and convincing by portraying him as one who joys in the thought rather than in the deed, and one who sees beauty the better, the less he handles it.[31] Like the great heroes of tragedy, he is not entirely without blame, but his actions are the result of his nature consistently portrayed, as are those of the lovely Stangerd of her own. The bewitching, which in the saga is laid to spaedom, is in Hewlett's story the result of a natural disposition.

The incidents in the latter part of the saga as given in the

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[31] *A Lovers' Tale*, p. 296.

Origines are improbable, confused, and purposeless. The rescue of Stangerd by Cormac, and the delivery of her by him to her husband show, like the ending of *Grettis*, the influence of the romances. This Arthurian touch was, of course, added by the thirteenth-century writer of the saga. He even invented a heathen giant to get rid of Cormac in romantic fashion. Hewlett takes this jumbled and unsagalike mess and ends the story with a moving, final parting. Stangerd, having dried her tears, says to him: "There is your ship, and my way lies yonder [at the home of Thorwald, her second husband]." A sort of epilogue in the form of Chapter XXV tells us that in the open sea Cormac kills a gray sea-beast which reveals the face of Thorweig, the spae-wife. There is no going back, however. Word is added that he served the kings of Norway, became a great viking, and finally settled at Scarborough.

Hewlett's use of the Collingwood and Stefánsson translation is likewise a credit to his art. He makes Stangerd worthy of love and irresistible. In the saga she is a spoiled child who bewitches Cormac and then jilts him; and who after a number of years proves heartless and worthless. Likewise, in the saga, Cormac bids her farewell but dies in the end with her name on his lips. His genius and daring contrast vividly with her fickleness and selfishness. Of course, the saga presents the case of its hero at the expense of Stangerd, but Hewlett ennobles her. The seeming perverseness of Cormac is explained by his nature: when first he looks upon Stangerd, it is with wonder and not with desire, but after he has once kissed her, she becomes a woman to him, no longer the goddess. She, not unnaturally, likes the change, but a chill comes over his heart, and the story proceeds to its conclusion. Granted that the nature of the youthful Cormac can be as it is portrayed and analyzed by Hewlett, there is no weakness in the story. No one can deny its force and appeal.

Nor can anyone deny the beauty of such writing as: "It seemed that he talked to Stangerd as if she were a beautiful landscape, a cornfield in heavy ear, or the fall when the heather was in flower, or a birchwood in early spring, or the firth in the

quiet of dawn."[32] And when the reader meets on the very first page: "but he died before the tale begins, which begins with Dalla, a widow and blind, and her two grown sons—Thorgils and Cormac," he knows that above all a stylist has come to the saga field.

Frey and His Wife (1916)

Encouraged by the well merited reception of *A Lovers' Tale*, Hewlett wrote and published the next year his second story from the sagas, *Frey and His Wife*. It appeared as a novelette in *McBride's Magazine*.

The sources are *The Tale of Ogmund Dint and Gunnere Helming* as given in the *Origines*,[33] and J. Sephton's translation of the "Great King Olaf Saga."[34] The sources are practically identical. This episode of Ogmund Dint is a part of *Víga-Glúms* saga, first translated into English by Sir Edmund Head in 1866, but it is unlikely that Hewlett went to it, for he does not in his story go beyond the *Origines* material. Ogmund's mother was a relative of Víga-Glúm and Ogmund was fostered by this hardy old Icelander, which two facts account for Ogmund's appearance in the great Icelandic saga. "The Great King Olaf Saga" is a compilation of all historical and legendary references to King Olaf in the *Heimskringla* and in many Icelandic sagas proper by an admirer who thought it desirable to collect all the material about King Olaf into a complete story. The compiler no doubt had access also to a Latin life of Olaf by one Odd Monk, who, as is to be expected, gives the legendary material. The story of Ogmund Dint and Gunnere Helming is taken by the author of "The Great King Olaf Saga" directly and completely from the earlier material of *Víga-Glúms* saga, the interest for him being, of course, the mention of King Olaf there.

The story is hardly one to make a good novel. It concerns a fugitive's falling in love with a beautiful woman, who is married to the idol Frey; and the subsequent escape of the two to the

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[33] *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 480–486.
[34] J. Sephton, *The Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason*, London, 1895, pp. 251–260.

court of Olaf, where they are baptized and remain ever in the true faith.

Hewlett makes a few changes in this story, chiefly in respect to Frey, as he would have to in any tale that would treat the legendary realistically. The saga says that Frey's idol was so enchanted that a fiend made use of it in order to speak to men, and that, when Gunnar during his terrific struggle with the god happened to mention the god of King Olaf, the fiend burst forth from the idol, so that Frey crashed broken to the ground. In Hewlett, the disbeliever, Gunnar gradually disillusions Sigrid to the point where, on the rounds to bless the crops, he kicks the wooden idol out forthwith, and, not unwelcomed, takes its place.

Again, the saga ends with the escape of the two to Norway and with their accepting Olaf's religion, but Hewlett invents a bit of history and completes the story in respect to Ogmund, with whom it begins. Olaf, incensed at Ogmund for his fastening of the murder of Hallward upon Gunnar through an exchange of cloaks, goes to Iceland. When he asks Glum to accept Christianity, the old warrior wonders how Olaf can ask him to be of the same religion as a man like Ogmund, who has earlier taken the faith. The king says that Glum may do as he pleases, as he is a credit to any religion. But when Ogmund asks for baptism, the king replies, "You shall have it. You shall be baptized first and hanged afterwards, lest your punishment be eternal as well as temporal."

Frey and His Wife impresses one merely as an exercise. It does demonstrate, however, how just a single episode found in the sagas by the thousands, can be expanded into a narrative of some interest and scope.

Thorgils (1917)

The third story by Maurice Hewlett is taken from the *Origines* account of Thorgils, Scarleg's stepson.[35] There was evidently a lost saga of Thorgils incorporated into a larger family history, which is now known as *Flóamanna* saga, one of the minor Ice-

[35] *Op. cit.*, II, 629–672.

landic sagas. The story of Thorgils from this saga is told in English elsewhere, in Baring-Gould's *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas*.[36] There is, however, no evidence that Hewlett used it.

Hewlett's interest in this story proceeds partly from its narrative possibilities, but, above all, from its portrayal of a good Icelander.[37] However, there are many good men in the sagas, and it is more than probable that Hewlett, who had an eye to his American readers, chose this story because it has to do, if only incidentally, with Greenland and Eric the Red.

As in the case of *A Lovers' Tale*, the plot of *Thorgils* is concerned with the strongly individualistic nature that explains the acts of the hero; but the narrative of *Thorgils* is more interesting in its episodes than that of Hewlett's first novel. It is not, however, so good a story; nor is it so well written.

The plot, briefly, concerns the journey of Thorgils to the colony of Eric the Red in Greenland, and portrays the unbelievable suffering occasioned by shipwreck and the treachery of his thralls. Through all his disasters, chief of which are the loss of Thorey, his wife, and the death of Thorfinn, his youngest son, he maintains his greatness of heart. He is true to his friends, and inspires from them enduring devotion. He is patient and slow to anger, but holds his own, though he has to deal with great and mighty men like Eric and Asgrim. He is always ready to make peace and confesses his own errors, but he is heavy-handed to those who do not behave well. He is true to his accepted Christian faith, though Hewlett does not make the book even by the slightest suggestion, a tract novel.

Saga gleanings form the basis of characterization around which Hewlett writes his story. What serves his purpose, he retains; what does not, he omits. There are no major differences, however, that a parallel study reveals, for Hewlett is neither inventive, nor rash enough, to think that any material additions or

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[36] *Op. cit.*, p. 368, ff. Baring-Gould records (p. 226) that he bought many sagas in 3 volumes from a poor Icelander. One of these volumes contained the *Flóamanna* saga. Baring-Gould's summary is in no sense a translation, but he tells enough of the story, which he calls *Thorgils' Nursling* (from Thorgils' nursing his own child, which was found crying and tugging at the breasts of its murdered mother), to make it complete and of interest.

[37] Maurice Hewlett, *Gudrid the Fair*, N. Y., 1918, p. ix.

subtractions from his pen can add to the saga story, which is more true, more strange, and more interesting than any fiction that he could invent.

The facts in the saga that Hewlett alters are noticeable, though not very material in the narrative. In the saga, Thorgils meets Eric abroad and goes to Greenland at his invitation. In Hewlett, Thorgils meets Eric when Thorgils intends to seek service with Earl Hacon of Norway. As a result of a fight with the Danes, Thorgils agrees to come to Greenland when sent for. In the saga Thorgils pares his own nipples, whence flow first blood, then water, and then milk to nourish his helpless boy. Hewlett omits this maternal phenomenon and explains Thorgils' love as a natural feeling of paternity and pity, augmented by grief for his lost wife.[38] The two native women found on the island are utilized by Hewlett as agents to point out to the grieved party the location of the treacherous thralls. In the saga, Thorgils shows Helga, his none-too-willing second wife, a barnyard scene in which a cock is beating a hen. There is an immediate improvement in her of will and disposition. In Hewlett, Thorgils kisses Helga and tells her that he now realizes for the first time how much he lost when she went away; and in the morning they are happy with each other.

Hewlett, in addition, adds to these slight changes a few effective touches. He gives a little genealogy to account for Thorgils' dislike of Thorgrim, his stepfather, and to justify a subsequent coolness toward his mother. He has Thorgils give Gudrun to his blood-brother, Eadwine, in the British Isles, though Thorgils is himself betrothed to her. He expands the scene at Iostan's home, where Thorey is chosen in preference to Gudrun. Later on in Greenland, when this same Gudrun is dying, she talks of having fallen in love once; and in this none-too-hidden confession of a love that Thorgils has long been aware of, there is an ennobling of both Thorgils' and Gudrun's characters. The delirium of Thorgils on his death-bed is likewise Hewlett's addition, to close the novel. The dying man

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[38] Hewlett hereby disregards the reason for the saga title, *Thorgils' Nursling*, in reference to the son, Thorfinn.

thinks that Thorey is her mother and that they are in a wooden house in a deserted bay. He strokes her hair and tells her to have patience and courage: "All will go well, my dear, for you and I have been lovers from the beginning and love outlives the dark." Helga looks on and takes it bravely. This is a very effective scene, and what may have been previously slighted in the portrayal of Thorgils' character as that of a good Icelander is here dramatically and conclusively implied.

Gudrid the Fair (1918)

Hewlett's fourth novel is a story taken from the *Origines*[39] versions of the saga of Eric the Red and that of Thorfinn Karlsefni. It seems almost inevitable that Hewlett should hit upon these two stories in his chief source book, for the subject is not only interesting in itself but doubly so to his American readers.

Hewlett takes the facts as he found them in these two distinct and separate accounts of the same events relating to the Norse discovery of America. He uses details and important events from each of the versions, gleaning from one or the other as they serve his purpose. From the saga of Eric the Red (Flatey-book) Hewlett uses the following items that do not appear in the Carlsefni version: all the matter of Biorn, especially his accidental discovery of the new land and his talk and information to Leif about it; Gudrid's first husband, Thore; the journey of Thorwald Ericsson to Wineland; the death of Thore; the voyage of Thorstan expressly for Thorwald's body; and the appearance and strange disappearance of the strange woman, also named Gudrid, in Wineland.

From Carlsefni's story (Hauk's Book and A. M. 557 versions in the *Origines*) Hewlett uses the following material not found in the other: the picture of Gudrid's home, family, and foster-

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[39] *Op. cit.*, pp. 588–625. Hewlett also mentions indebtedness to Samuel Laing's *Sea Kings of Norway*, which refers to his translation from the Danish of the *Saga of Eric the Red*, published in Volume III of his *Heimskringla* translation.

N. L. Beamish (1841), J. Sephton (1880), and Arthur Middleton Reeves (1890) did the best known other translations of this material. There are many reprints and versions to testify to the romantic appeal of, and historical interest in, the Norse discovery of America. Hewlett may have read these before 1905, but the *Origines* has all the material he uses.

ing; Gudrid's girlhood suitor, Einar; Thorbeorn's removal to Greenland with his family; the stay at Heriuf's farmstead and the prophecy of Thorberg relating to the three husbands of Gudrid; Gudrid's singing the Ward-locks; the two famous Scots runners, Hace and Hæcia, given by Leif, who had them first from King Olaf Tryggvason; and Freydis' assault upon the Scrælings.

Other narrative episodes in Hewlett's story are found in both sources, though they are given much more fully in the Carlsefni story.

Hewlett relates the facts as found and puts nothing into the narrative that, he says, cannot be implied in the texts.[40] His concern, however, is primarily with Gudrid, whom he wishes, in this companion volume to *Thorgils*, to portray as a good Icelandic woman. Hewlett finds the story of "Gudrid, the many times a wife and the always sweet and reserved, a more absorbing tale than the discovery of Wineland."[41] "Character makes plot in life as in fiction,"[42] and Hewlett's invention concerns the explorers of Wineland, without doing violence to the history as recorded. He has been more interested in Gudrid and her babies than he need be as an historian. If he reads of Gudrid as a handsome woman, he is bound soon to know what color her hair was, and how she twisted it up. If he hears of three husbands, he cannot rest until he knows how she liked them; what feelings she and they had.[43]

Hewlett has taken some pains with Freydis, too. He admires her greatly, though he admits he would rather have been Gudrid's fourth husband than Freydis' first.[44]

Hewlett uses his preface largely to explain why he makes exploration of secondary interest. He has chosen wisely, for invention of narrative does not add conviction to a supposedly

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[40] Maurice Hewlett, *Gudrid the Fair*, N. Y., 1918, p. vi.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. xii.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. vi.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. vii.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. x. It is difficult to see why Hewlett admired Freydis. One reading of her terrible deeds in the Eric story should be sufficient; and in the Carlsefni story neither her own mother nor father has much love or soft speech for her. Hewlett undoubtedly uses her as a foil to Gudrid. Jealous and bitter by nature, even Freydis is bound to like Gudrid, though she admits it not.

historical novel. Of the novels written by others on this subject, an interesting comparison can be made. *Randvar the Songsmith* and *The Vinland Champions* are largely invented narrative and enter the category of juvenile tales; and *The Thrall of Leif the Lucky* has some characterization that raises it slightly above that group. *Gudrid the Fair*, however, could have been written around any historical setting, for the heart and soul of Gudrid form the nucleus of the book, and the characterization of her, enduring and lifelike, lives behind a setting of far-off events.

In no sense an Amelia, Gudrid moves, a gentle, gracious, and compelling figure, throughout the book. The prophecy that she is to have three husbands, Hewlett has used to advantage in his delineation of her nobility: she is glad that her youthful lover, Einar, can no more be the first or the second. She feels sorry for Thore, whom she cannot love, because he seems to be fated. Thorstan, she cannot think about, for she loves him, and in such cases thinking is left to others. And Thorfinn Carlsefni is the third, and she believes in his star.

All people who know her or meet her come under her spell: Thorberg, Halldis, Eric, Leif, and even Freydis. And by her relations with these people and others, and by Hewlett's analysis and comment, one feels that in her and in them, great and human figures, neither epic nor too heroic, stand out lifelike in the reading, from an age whose activities and stirring events make the task of enduring character-portrayal a difficult one.

In the sagas recording the discovery of Wineland the Good, one is interested in the narrative chiefly and, if he is somewhat imaginative, he likes to speculate, though it gets him nowhere. In *Gudrid the Fair* one forgets the history. Hewlett perpetuates the memory of a noble character, who seems more real than the events in which she plays a part.

The Outlaw (*1920*)

The fifth adaptation of the Norse sagas is the only one for which Hewlett went entirely outside the *Origines*, though he was introduced to the subject by that compendium. A discussion of the *Gísla* saga together with a part of the Icelandic text is found there.[45]

[45] *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 188–237: the reference to Dasent's translation is found on

The reference to Dasent's great translation,[46] rendering one by Vigfusson and Powell unnecessary, proves to be the source of Hewlett's idea for the book. Hewlett also makes mention of indebtedness to Beatrice Barmby's dramatic version of the story of Gisli (1900), but there is nothing that she has added to Dasent's version to make the story more vivid or more dramatic.

Hewlett sticks to Dasent, with the result that his novel is virtually a retelling of the story, with some description and exposition added. The tragedy is a great tale, but to the saga-man belongs the chief credit. Hewlett has made the story more accessible, and though it is now also more approachable for the average reader, it is in no sense a substitute for one of the best translations of one of the best Icelandic sagas, and certainly the best of the so-called minor ones.

It is interesting, however, to note how well and easily an artist can paraphrase one of these old classics into a readable novel. It is a wonder that more writers have not done the same thing, making as Maurice Hewlett does, a complete acknowledgment. The sagas of Grettir and Njal have been retold for boys,[47] but they are too epic for juvenile minds. They belong to the great stories of world literature.

Hewlett's book has preserved the great moments of the saga, and they are not for the young and the inexperienced. The *Gísla* saga is a tragic story of great pathos based on the sacred idea of sworn brotherhood. The moral and fatal necessity on the part of Gisli to avenge Vestan's death brings the blood feud within Gisli's own family, and he who, peaceful and industrious, twice before back in Norway has had the quarrel of others thrust upon him, is pursued to the death by an unmerited curse in Iceland. The story is made doubly impressive and imaginative by the appearance of two dream-women, one kindly, and the other ill-disposed. As the lights seen in his dream and interpreted

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p. 191. Two incidents of the short saga are translated in the *Origines*, pp. 562–566. They are the murder of Westan and the slaying of Thorgrim Thorstansson.

[46] G. W. Dasent, *The Story of Gisli the Outlaw*, Edinburgh, 1866. The *Origines* gives the date of 1865, which error Hewlett propagates in his preface to the *Outlaw*.

[47] See Allen French and Baring-Gould in Chapter III.

to number the years left for him to live become fewer and as the visits of the evil dream-woman become more frequent, Gisli becomes afraid to dwell alone in his hiding place, and he mentally accepts his fate, although, as in Greek story, he is ever courageous to resist it physically. Throughout the saga the devotion of Aud, the sister of Vestan, to her husband-hero makes many great moments. She is the noblest of saga women, excepting not even Gudrun (*Laxdæla*) or Steingerda (*Kormáks*).

Hewlett's chief interests have been to add to the characterization of Gisli and to ennoble the faithfulness of Aud without altering the substance of the story. Gisli is contrasted with his showy brother Thorkel; his courage is accentuated by the character and number of foes leagued against him, and he becomes ever less mindful of himself as his fate closes about him.

Hewlett gives the story a somewhat more noticeable fatalism by keeping the sword and spear more prominent throughout, especially at the beginning and the close. He leaves out the saga vengeance upon Skeggi for the burning of the Soursops' home in Norway. He gives a good picture of the landing in Iceland, of Gisli in his working clothes, of Thorkel in his fine raiment, and foreshadows coming events by having Vestan pick Gisli out for special welcome. Hewlett leaves out Gisli's trip abroad and has the halves of the coin that are to summon the friend in need exchanged at the time of the rite of blood-brotherhood. He softens Thorkel's character by blaming much upon his indecision. He makes Thordis more implacable toward her brother Gisli because of his forced action against her youthful lover and of his revenge against her husband, but it seems here that Hewlett confuses her character a bit by keeping intact the saga episode wherein she tries to slay Eyjolf, fresh from the death of Gisli. At the games proposed by Thorkel, Gisli chooses Geirmund, who had little skill at sports. This is a lovely touch, as are all the instinctive touches of friendliness of both Geirmund and Gudrid for the noble Gisli. Hewlett makes a mere mention of Gisli's narrow escapes as an idiot boy in the boat and as a bedmate in the home of the scolded Ref, episodes which are expanded in the saga. And lastly, Hewlett magnifies two great scenes: the first, where Thordis, her fingers covered with dirt

and blood, is digging at the grave of Thorgrim because she thinks in her delirium that the sweating of the earth caused by the melting snow is an indication that he lives; and the second, the last fight, ushered in by a picture of Gisli, asleep on the knees of the faithful Aud, and concluded as he cries, "Farewell my Aud," and disembowelled and dying, throws himself upon the press below.

There are scenes in this saga that are unforgettable, and Hewlett, who wished always to be a poet and was sometimes a dramatist, has made the most of them as novelist-adapter.

Light Heart (*1920*)

The sixth and last of Hewlett's saga novels, *Light Heart*, is also taken from the *Origines*.[48] Vigfusson and Powell have chopped up the saga of the foster-brothers and made of it, with several questionable suppositions, two sagas of Thormod: one, translated as *The Story of Thormod, S. Olave's Poet;* and the other, as *The Story of Thormod Coalbrow's Poet*. From *The Story of Thormod S. Olave's Poet*, Hewlett has taken chiefly the details of Thorgar's and Thormod's youth and everything relating to Thorgar, including the inviolable vow of blood-brotherhood; likewise Thormod's life at the court of Cnut, his journeying hence with Harek, his falling in with Olaf, the scenes before Sticklestead, and the cutting off of the arm of the franklin who reached for the ring on the arm of the dying Thormod. Details of Olaf's enemies and of the battle in general, forming a small part of the story, Hewlett takes from Samuel Laing's translation of the St. Olaf saga. From the *Story of Thormod Coalbrow's Poet*, Hewlett takes all the details of the stories of Thormod's two transitory love affairs, those with Thordis and Thorbeorg; the long recital of Thormod as the avenger in Greenland; and the very effective close in which the leech-woman aids him in extracting the arrow, the barbs of which, covered with blood and flesh, lead him to utter his final words: "The king has fed us well. There is a white coat of fat about the roots of my heart."[49]

[48] *Origines*, II, pp. 673–743.
[49] *Ibid.*, II, p. 743.

There are two essentially different stories here: that of Thormod's affairs with Thorgar and that of his relations with St. Olaf. Hewlett makes Thormod's friendship for Thorgar too serious for him ever to have a great love affair with a woman, and when he accomplishes the idea to which he has first dedicated his life, namely, the avenging of Thorgar, he further dedicates his life to a man, this time to St. Olaf. The story would be quite sufficient, and more convincing, if it were just a story of sworn-brotherhood and its consequences, which bring the hero into contact with Olaf and with the stirring scene at Sticklestead.

The reason for the title Hewlett himself explains by saying that Thormod had a *light heart* and a high heart; that he feared nothing except love and dared everything for love's sake (true if one can call attachment to Thorgar and to Olaf "love"); and that his transfer of allegiance from his dead foster-brother, Thorgar, to King Olaf was made *light-heartedly* upon a moment's impulse but when made, made for life.[50]

The split in the middle of the saga story between the consummation of vengeance for Thorgar and Thormod's dedication of himself to the cause of Olaf is explained by Thormod's self-surrender in obedience to an intuition. Olaf, however, appears in the story before the trip of either Thorgar or Thormod to Greenland, and it does not seem, as Hewlett feels, that there is such a character jump to be made and explained. Thormod's death by the side of Olaf is a better and more heroic ending to both the saga and Hewlett stories than would be his sneaking away from Greenland on a merchant ship after the avenging of his friend.

Hewlett gives the story a unity by making Thormod the subject of the book, rather than his deeds, but his deeds are more interesting than his character. There seems little justification for introducing the two light love affairs. They are found in the saga, and the faithful Hewlett puts them in. The saga records them; it does not explain them. Hewlett accounts for them by suggesting in his character portrayal that Thormod gave his

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[50] Maurice Hewlett, *Light Heart*, N. Y., 1920, p. v ff.

heart only to men. One suspects that this could be more simply explained by the fact that Thormod just never settled down. This bald statement, however, would take much from the rather idealistic conception of Hewlett's hero, who, as a poet, defies too concrete an analysis.

The character of Thormod is strongly drawn, and he remains a vivid personality, but this Old Norse tale leaves its greatest impressions from two series of incidents: the actions of Thormod in Greenland; and the death of Thormod with the unfinished poem on his lips. This last event with its precedent moments lingers as one of the great scenes from the sagas, and as one that will always be retained and remembered, though it is but one in a field that claims hundreds equally dramatic. Hewlett has made the most of this closing scene. He has subtracted nothing and added only: "And as she [the leech-woman] looked, she saw his eyes fix and glaze."[51]

With *Light Heart*, Hewlett's fevered revival of the novel came to a close. The silence became almost prophetic. This, his last, was published three years before his death in 1923. He came to the saga subjects late, and despite what he has said about his dislike for the novel as a genre, sagas must have proven not uninteresting to him, for he wrote his six tales within a period of five years. He gives the secret of his interest, it is evident, when he refers to them as the "romance of a bygone day."[52] It is not difficult to imagine the romantic appeal of this subject to the author of *Earthwork Out of Tuscany* and *Little Novels of Italy*.

The complete absence of references (other than the few given earlier in this chapter) in Hewlett's writings or literary remains to Icelandic material is surprising. In all, the translations to which he refers are those of *The Lives of the Kings of Norway* (*Heimskringla*); *Landnámabók; Origines Islandicae; Saga of King Olaf* (The Great King Olaf Saga); *Kormáks* saga; *Gísla* saga; *Njáls; Laxdœla; Halgi and Sigrim;* and *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*. He may have read more, but it is extremely probable that he would have revealed the fact, had his acquaintance

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. v.

been much more extensive. One concludes that he liked what he read in the field, but read during his waning and few remaining creative years only what he put to definite use in either story or background.

No author could adhere more closely than does Hewlett to narrative materials and to the spirit of the originals. He uses larger themes and episodes unaltered. Scene painting is not found in the sagas, nor in Hewlett, except for the merest indication of landscape. In common with the sagas there is no rhetoric to enhance plain deeds. In dialogue he does no violence to the spirit of the sagas and uses most of it as found. He never invents incident but tries only to account for it.

Hewlett found that the sagas omitted things essential to the understanding of modern readers, to whom he wished to hand the stories down. The novel form required that this nakedness and frugality be expanded and analysed somewhat. The result of all this is that the six novels have characterizations that are clear and vivid and that at the same time take the reader back to the past as the sagas themselves reveal it. Those who are acquainted with the violence too often done to historical material may perhaps condone in Hewlett a seeming lack of narrative invention even in minor episodes. The moving scenes and dramatic moments were his for the taking. He has added to Gudrid, Cormac, Stangerd, Thormod, Aud, Gisli, and Thorfinn as living personalities, but like most historical personages they do not measure up to the great figures of fiction. One can unequivocally add for Hewlett, however, that reading about his men and women is the next best thing to reading the sagas in which they appear.

Conclusion

A survey of Icelandic studies in English shows that the earliest interest in Icelandic literature evidenced by both scholars and writers lay in its poetry; then in its historical significance; and finally, when the great manuscripts of the sagas became available, in the glories of its prose. Timid and prophetic appearances of abstracts and epitomes of sagas were made in English, generally from other modern languages, before the great translations appeared, and when scholars' handbooks, such as a grammar and a dictionary, made more possible the study of Icelandic in English, then this great hitherto unknown body of medieval literature came rapidly from the press. There are two distinct schools of translators from the Icelandic. Of the one, Dasent's name stands out as most distinguished among a group of scholars and literary men because of the naturalness and the simple spirit of his renderings. Morris and Magnússon represent the best of the other school of translators; in fact, they set the vogue of using compounds, in the manner of the Teutonic languages, and archaisms that, while aiming at the preservation of old words and roots, have left translations that lack for modern readers the directness and simplicity of saga speech, the forceful speech of every day man. The scholar, the English philologist, and the lover of poetical language will not regret their manner, however.

When the great body of historical sagas such as the *Heimskringla* and the sagas of Eric the Red, and of the Orkneys, became available, one would have expected English novelists to be attracted to their themes. It is to be observed, however, that most of this fresh and virile material became available after the interest in the historical novel had waned with the death of Scott in 1832. However, a revival of interest in the romance of the past that came about in the latter part of the nineteenth century and is evidenced especially in poetry, led to a secondary interest among novelists in the historical theme. On this wave, the Icelanders and vikings sailed the seas again, though in their long lay-off they had lost some of their skill

and hardihood. The major novelists looked on unmoved, but lesser writers were not so heartless.

In all, fifty-seven English novels are variously indebted to the spirit and subject matter of the sagas. Of the eighteen novels on the "raid" theme, mostly juvenile, and therefore excessively heroic and instructive, those by Whistler are significant for quantity and uniform excellence in writing. *Havelok the Dane* is his best. The "raid" theme is treated, however, from the sympathetic viewpoint of the raided, so that in juvenile tales one finds the Old Norse element and spirit, better, more truthfully, and more instinctively treated in the adaptations by Allen French and Baring-Gould of the *Grettis* and *Njáls* sagas; in Allen French's *Rolf and the Viking's Bow;* in Leighton's *Olaf the Glorious;* and in the imaginatively written Julian Corbett's *The Fall of Asgard.*

There are seven novels that stand forth as the best of the entire field: Rider Haggard's *Eric Brighteyes;* Eddison's *Styrbiorn the Strong;* and Maurice Hewlett's *A Lovers' Tale, Gudrid the Fair, Thorgils,* and *The Outlaw.* Of these, *Eric Brighteyes* is the most notable: it is original in plot, but its originality has kept within the bounds of probability; it has caught the spirit of the sagas faithfully; it has the brilliance of saga dialogue; it exemplifies the manly virtues through a noble, heroic, and tragic hero; it has rememberable scenes; and it is written with an imagination that adds to its emotional appeal.

Hewlett's novels have little originality in plot. They range from the direct paraphrase in *The Outlaw* to the expansion of the character of Gudrid, but even *Gudrid the Fair* does no violence to the source material. Hewlett attempts to supply what the sagas lack for modern understanding. He has left out much of the genealogy and extraneous episodes that play little part in his character evocation. He uses dialogue where given, and, where not, he adds dialogue of his own to bridge the omission. He comments in asides in the manner of novelists. He has left withal characters that stand out from the field in tales that are both easy and interesting to read. He has revealed human personalities in a setting and in altered circumstances of living that do not seem so far removed from our era.

In evaluating all the novels on saga subjects one must always remember that the best of the sagas would be weakened by expansion and treatment, prose or poetic. The sagaman was the best of story tellers, and he had the best of subjects for the practice of his art. The sagas are unique in literature. The novel belongs to a different genre, though one that is closely allied. The best of the novels on the sagas are the nearest approximation to the sagas; but the best saga novels are not to be ranked with the best, even of the historical, novels in English.

APPENDIX

The studies of four American scholars, Conrad Hjalmar Nordby, George Lyman Kittredge, Frank Edgar Farley, and Paul Robert Lieder (see bibliography), have left fairly available the names and researches of the antiquaries who, before the 18th Century, had published in the Old Icelandic field. The work of these early antiquaries, mostly in Latin, was known to a few English scholars before 1700, but it was not until George Hickes' *Thesaurus*, Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* and *Northern Antiquities*, and Gray's two Norse Odes had been published that attention of English writers was drawn to the old literature of Iceland and the North.

It would seem, however, advisable in the interest of completeness to prefix to the chronological list given in this appendix the names and works of the chief English antiquaries and scholars who preceded George Hickes in publishing studies designed for the intelligence of the layman as well as for the student of special interests. The writer is largely indebted to Frank Edgar Farley for the information concerning these earlier men and their works.

Richard Rowland (Rowlands), better known as Richard Verstegan (or Verstegen), in *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities concerning the most noble and renowned English Nation*, Antwerp, 1605, became the first Englishman to investigate the origin of Germanic peoples. Not for him were the French versions of Aeneas, the Trojans, and King Brute. He gave accounts of the descent of the English from Germanic peoples, of the invasions of the Saxons, and, less accurately, of the spread of people after the collapse of the tower of Babel. Likewise he gives accounts of Saxon words and Teutonic gods.

Henry Spelman published *Glossarium Archaiologicum* (first part in 1626 and the second, edited by Dugdale, in 1664), which is of interest chiefly because of the author's acquaintance with Ole Worm and Arngrim Jonsson and their work.

William Nicolson, a friend of Hickes, was sent to Leipzig to get a knowledge of Dutch and Northern languages. Although interested primarily in Anglo-Saxon antiquities, he wrote, in his English atlas, of Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland.

Francis Junius (François Du Jon) became interested in Norse while studying Anglo-Saxon and Gothic literature. He published at Dort in 1665, an edition of Anglo-Saxon and Gothic gospels, and added an appendix in which he printed various alphabets, among them the Runic, in movable type. This type he brought himself to England and is the same that was used by Hickes in his *Thesaurus*.

Robert Sheringham in *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio* (Cambridge, 1670) supplemented the work of Verstegan. He quotes from the "Prose Edda"

and Snorri's "Norwegian Kings" and gives specimens of Norse poetry with Latin translations.

Daniel Langhorne cites Sheringham, Saxo, Jonsson, Snorri, and others in his *Elenchus Antiquitatum*, published in 1673.

Aylett Sammes in *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata, or the Antiquities of Ancient Britain* (London, 1676) prints the Norse runic alphabet, quotes the prose Edda's account in Norse of Odin's expedition out of Asia and gives an extract from the Eddic poem, *Hávamál*.

There were, besides, various historians and laymen interested in the North. Mention must be made of Samuel Purchas. In *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (London, 1613) he prints among other things the *Islandia* of a traveler named Blefken, who made a voyage to Iceland in 1563 and published an account of it at Leyden in 1607. In *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London 1619–1625, in 3 parts) Purchas prints in English his translation of Dithmar Blefken's, *Voyages and Historie of Island and Groenland* and gives likewise an *Extract of Arngrim Ionas an Islander, his Chrymogoea or Historie of Island.* Purchas also mentions Jonsson's "Booke of Island," which Hakluyt translated for the first volume of his *Voyages*.

This short and borrowed summary includes the names (with the exception of Hakluyt, who is given special mention in the list below because of his importance and fame) of all the significant writers who played a part in introducing Icelandic studies and subjects into England. The chronological list below is designed to show the growing interest that followed in the wake of these earlier researches and led to the making of the great bulk of Icelandic prose literature available to English readers and writers.

Chronology of Icelandic Translations and Icelandic Studies

1599—Hakluyt, *Voyages:* "A Briefe Commentarie of Iceland" by Arngrimr Jonsson in Vol. I, pp. 550–590.

1703–05—George Hickes, *Thesaurus*, containing "The Waking of Angantyr," a poem translated from the *Hervarar* saga.

1763—Bishop Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry from the Icelandic*, containing a prose version of *The Death Song of Ragnar Lodbrach or Lodbrog, King of Denmark.*

1770—Bishop Percy's translation, *Northern Antiquities*, of Mallet's *Monumens . . . des Anciens Scandinaves.*

1782—James Johnstone, *Anecdotes of Olave the Black, King of Man.*

1782—James Johnstone, *Norwegian Account of Haco's Expedition against Scotland A. D., 1263.*

1788—G. J. Thorkelin, *Fragments of English and Irish History in the 9th and 10th Centuries.*

1797—A. S. Cottle, *Icelandic Poetry, or the Edda of Saemund:* a verse translation.
1804–06—William Herbert, *Select Icelandic Poetry.*
1814—Sir Walter Scott's abstract of the *Eyrbyggja* saga.
1827—*Foreign Quarterly Review*, Ed. R. P. Gillies, encouraged and aided by Sir Walter Scott.
1834—William Forbes Skene, *Extracts from Norse Sagas.*
1839—Grenville Pigott, *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, containing a popular account of the two Eddas.
1839—George Stephens' translation from the Swedish of Tegnér's *Frithiofs* saga.
1840—Thorleif Gudmundsson Repp, *A Memoir of Einar Sokkason.*
1841—N. L. Beamish, *Saga of Eric the Red.*
1842—G. W. Dasent, *Prose or Younger Edda.*
1843—Dasent's translation of Rask's *Icelandic Grammar.*
1844—Samuel Laing's translation of the *Heimskringla or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway.*
1847—Summaries of the *Kormáks*, *Njáls*, and *Laxdæla* sagas in Blackwell's edition of Mallet-Percy, *Northern Antiquities.*
1848—Thomas Wright, *Saga of Sigurd the Crusader.*
1859—G. W. Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse.*
1861—G. W. Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal.*
1863—Sabine Baring-Gould, *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas.*
1864—G. E. J. Powell and E. Magnússon's translation of Jón Árnason's *Icelandic Legends*, 1st Series (2nd Series, 1866).
1866—Sir Edmund Head, *The Story of Viga-Glúm.*
1866—Dasent, *The Story of Gisli the Outlaw.*
1869—Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris, *The Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-Tongue and Rafn the Skald.*
1869—Magnússon and Morris, *The Story of Grettir the Strong.*
1869—"Farĕese Saga" in *Blackwood's Magazine.*
1870—Magnússon and Morris, *The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs with Certain Songs from the Elder Edda.*
1871—William Morris, *The Story of Frithiof the Bold.*
1873—Jón Hjaltalín and Gilbert Goudie, *Orkneyinga* saga.
1874—Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, including a grammar.
1875—Magnússon and Morris, *Three Northern Love Stories and Other Tales.*
1875—Magnússon, *Saga of Archbishop Thomas á Becket.*
1877—Rasmus B. Anderson and Jón Bjarnason, *Viking Tales of the North.*
1879—E. W. Gosse's epitome of the *Egils* saga.

1879—Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *An Icelandic Prose Reader.*
1880—J. Sephton, *Eirik the Red's Saga.*
1882—J. Coles, *Summer Travelling in Iceland.*
1882—Emily S. Cappel, *Old Norse Sagas*, including those of Ragnar Lodbrók, Hrólfr Kraki, et al., retold.
1883—Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale.*
1885—John B. Miller, *The Joms-Vikings Icelandic Saga Retold.*
1889–90—Paul Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age.*
1890—Oliver Elton, *The Life of Lawrence, Bishop of Hólar.*
1890—Arthur Middleton Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good.*
1891—Magnússon and Morris, *Saga Library*, Vol. I.
1892—*Ibid.*, Vol. II.
1893—*Ibid.*, Vol. III.
1893—W. C. Green, *The Story of Egil Skallagrimsson.*
1894—Magnússon and Morris, *Saga Library*, Vol. IV.
1894—Dasent, *Orkneyingers' Saga* and *The Saga of Hacon* together with *A Fragment of the Saga of Magnus.*
1895—Mrs. Disney Leith, *Stories of the Bishops of Iceland.*
1895—Magnússon and Morris, *Saga Library*, Vol. V.
1895—J. Sephton, *The Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason:* known as "The Great King Olaf Saga."
1896—F. Y. Powell, *The Tale of Thrond of Gate, Commonly Called Færeyinga Saga.*
1898—Israel Gollancz, *Hamlet in Iceland, Being the Icelandic Romantic Ambales Saga.*
1899—J. Sephton, *The Saga of King Sverri of Norway.*
1899—Muriel A. C. Press, *Laxdæla Saga.*
1902—W. G. Collingwood and Jón Stefánsson, *The Life and Death of Kormac the Skald.*
1905—Vigfusson and Powell, *Origines Islandicae.*
1907—W. G. Collingwood, *A Legend of Shetland from Fljotsdæla Saga.*
1910—Geir Zoëga, *Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic.*
1913—George Ainslie Hight, *The Saga of Grettir the Strong.*
1916—Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, *The Prose Edda by Snorri Sturluson.*
1923—Henry Adams Bellows, *The Poetic Edda.*

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